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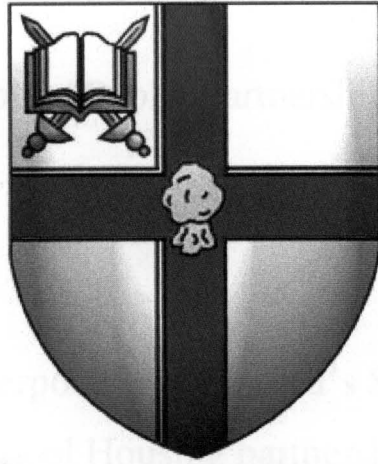
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BUSINESS SCHOOL

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Theme: A Public / Public Partnership Arrangement

A Case Study of Liverpool City Council's Speke One Stop Shop
and South Liverpool Housing partnership arrangement:
Is it successful from an employee's viewpoint?

Sheila Yates

Liverpool City Council

May, 2005

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Degree of Master of Business Administration

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Acknowledgements

I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to embark on this MBA programme by Liverpool City Council, who has been my sponsor for the past three years. I would like to thank my close colleagues who have been both understanding and supportive of me through this academic journey. I am sure some of them, at times, must have felt they too were on the programme. In conjunction with Liverpool City Council, I would like also to thank the University College Chester, particularly Paul Webb and Steve Page for their advice, support and guidance, which was always readily given and gratefully received.

My thanks are also extended to my colleagues in the Speke One Stop Shop and South Liverpool Housing for their time and effort given in providing me with the primary data necessary in order to undertake this piece of research.

However though, most importantly, my heart felt thanks are given to my family for being so supportive, understanding and having faith in me, in particular my mum, Peg, who has been my rock for the last three years.

Abstract

In 1999 a new Chief Executive was appointed to Liverpool City Council (LCC). The nine original directorates were stream lined into the five current portfolio areas. LCC has dramatically changed and improved the way it delivers its services to the customer, which has been developed through the introduction of the Customer Contact Strategy (CCS) Through the CCS there are a number of contact channels, which give a first point of contact choice of access to a citizen. A key component of the strategy is the development of a network of fourteen One-Stop Shops (OSS's) across the city. There are currently ten in operation. The Shops provide face-to-face contact for customers for council and partner services.

This study focuses its attention on the partnership arrangement between the Speke OSS and South Liverpool Housing (SLH), who are a registered social landlord (RSL). Staff based in the Speke OSS share the same building and counter facility with staff from SLH. Both organisations are located in the Parklands Building, which is a Public Finance Initiative (PFI). This is a unique partnership in England and Wales and the first of its kind in delivering “joined up” services. From the findings of the initial research, the author proposes and introduces a model named the “CHANGED” model. A contrasting merger between Chester College and Warrington Collegiate Institute is examined as a case study in **appendix 7**. In order to further test the validity of the aforementioned model, the author has carried out further research with a focus group of LCC 2nd year MBA students. The findings of which are described in Chapter Five.

Adopting both qualitative and quantitative research methods, this research aims to treat the partnership arrangement as a “case study” to establish the success of the partnership: where success is taken to mean a process beneficial to staff in meeting organisational goals. The research aims and questions that are to be explored in this study are:

1. How has the partnership arrangement managed to enable staff to provide a seamless service in dealing with customers?
2. What evidence is there to suggest that a single culture has developed between staff from both organizations?

The study illustrates the investigation and analysis of data, tests the data against established theory, discusses the findings and uses the results as a basis to identify possible recommendations. These recommendations could be incorporated into the development of a tool kit (CHANGED model) or similar model, which may be adopted in the success of future partnership arrangements which LCC may choose to embark upon.

Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously for any academic purpose.
All secondary sources are acknowledged.

Signed:

Date:

Table of Contents

	Page
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	3
<i>Abstract</i>	4
<i>Declaration</i>	6
<i>Table of Contents</i>	7
<i>List of Appendices</i>	10
<i>List of Tables</i>	11
<i>List of Figures</i>	12
<i>List of Graphs</i>	13
1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background to the research	14
1.1.1 The One Stop Shops	15
1.1.2 South Liverpool Housing	16
1.1.3 The partnership Arrangement	17
1.2 Research Question	19
1.3 Justification for the research	20
1.4 Methodology	21
1.5 Outline of the chapters	22
1.6 Defining the Terms	23
1.6.1 “Joined up” working	24
1.6.2 Organisational Culture	24
1.7 Summary	26
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1. Introduction	28
2.2. The use of Partnerships in Service Delivery	29
2.3. Alignment between organizational Cultures	33

2.4.	<i>Summary</i>	41
3.	METHODOLOGY	
3.1.	<i>Introduction</i>	43
3.2.	<i>Research Methods and Philosophies</i>	43
3.3.	<i>Application of methodology</i>	46
3.4.	<i>Process</i>	47
3.4.1.	<i>Research Design and Data Collection</i>	49
3.4.2.	<i>Additional Research</i>	51
3.5.	<i>Rejected Methods</i>	51
3.6.	<i>Limitations</i>	51
3.7.	<i>Ethical Considerations</i>	53
3.8.	<i>Summary</i>	54
4.	FINDINGS	
4.1.	<i>Introduction</i>	55
4.2.	<i>Analysis - Semi structured interviews with the One Stop Shop Head of Service and South Liverpool Housing's Customer Services Manager</i>	57
4.3.	<i>Analysis – Customer Service Advisor's Questionnaires</i>	59
4.4.	<i>Analysis - Team Manager Focus Group</i>	86
4.5.	<i>Summary</i>	94
5.	CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS	
5.1.	<i>Introduction</i>	95
5.2.	<i>Critical Evaluation of the Adopted Methodology</i>	96
5.3.	<i>Conclusions about the Research Question</i>	99

5.3.1	<i>Theoretical Application</i>	99
5.3.2	<i>Application of Ongaro's Enabling Factors for Process Management in the Public Sector</i>	102
5.3.3	<i>Evaluation Zones for the Assessment of Cultural Maturity and Alignment</i>	104
5.3.4	<i>Staff Comments</i>	106
5.3.5	<i>Comparison between the OSS and SLH Partnership with Chester University College and Warrington Collegiate Institute merger to test the validity of the "CHANGED" Model</i>	108
5.4.	<i>Conclusions about the Research Problem</i>	110
5.4.1	<i>Conclusions – The questionnaires completed by the MBA Focus Group</i>	111
5.5.	<i>Limitations of the Study</i>	113
5.6.	<i>Opportunities for Further Research</i>	113
6.	<i>RECOMMENDATIONS</i>	115
6.1.	<i>Introduction</i>	
	<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>	117

APPENDICES

1	<i>Transcript Interview with The OSS Head of Service</i>	120
2	<i>Transcript Interview with SLH’s Customer Services Manager</i>	123
3	<i>The Customer service Advisor Questionnaire</i>	126
4	<i>Focus Group Questions</i>	123
5	<i>Transcript of Team Manager Focus Group</i>	133
6	<i>Questionnaire (University Chester College and Warrington Collegiate Institute Case Study)</i>	136
7	<i>Case Study – University College Chester and Warrington Collegiate Institute merger</i>	144
8	<i>Questionnaire for 2nd Year MBA Students</i>	172

List of Tables

<i>T 1</i>	<i>List of Council Services offered across the One Stop Shops</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>T 2</i>	<i>Evaluation Zones for the assessment of Cultural Maturity and Alignment</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>T 3</i>	<i>Eight tests of a Healthy Partnership- OSS/SLH</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>T 4</i>	<i>Alternative terms for the main Research Paradigms</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>T5</i>	<i>Assumptions of the two main paradigms</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>T6</i>	<i>Assumptions of Research Undertaken</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>T7</i>	<i>Sample showing no correlation between time employed in the One Stop Shop for LCC staff and response</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>T8</i>	<i>Sample showing no correlation between time employed in the OSS for SLH staff and responses</i>	<i>62</i>
<i>T9</i>	<i>Percentage of staff comments outlining reasons for the partnership enabling a joined up service</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>T10</i>	<i>Percentage of staff comments outlining reasons for the partnership not enabling a joined up service</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>T11</i>	<i>Likert Scale Analysis</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>T12</i>	<i>Additional Comments from Respondents</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>T13</i>	<i>Responses from questions 9,10 and 11</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>T14</i>	<i>Staff comments from question 13</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>T15</i>	<i>Staff comments from question 14</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>T16</i>	<i>Staff comments from question 15</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>T17</i>	<i>Evaluation Zones for the assessment of Cultural Maturity and Alignment – The OSS and SLH Partnership Arrangement</i>	<i>105</i>

List of Figures

<i>F 1</i>	<i>Enabling Factors for process Management in the Public Sector</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>F2</i>	<i>The Essential Building Blocks for OSS and SLH Joint Working</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>F3</i>	<i>The OSS and SLH’s Cultural Web</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>F4</i>	<i>Work Flow Analysis</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>F5</i>	<i>The “CHANGED” Model – 7 Elements for a Successful Partnership</i>	<i>145</i>
<i>F6</i>	<i>Enabling Factors for process Management in the Public Sector – The OSS and SLH Partnership Arrangement</i>	<i>103</i>

List of Graphs

G 1	<i>Staff appreciation and understanding of the Partnership Arrangement</i>	62
G2	<i>Method used to communicate the Partnership Arrangement</i>	63
G3	<i>Staff self- perception if they feel the partnership has enabled them to provide a more joined up service</i>	64
G4	<i>Do staff feel a single culture has developed between both sets of staff</i>	66
G5	<i>Would access to each organizations computer systems enable greater joined up working</i>	67
G6	<i>Graph showing if staff feel they follow the same working procedures and protocols</i>	68
G7	<i>Promotion of the Partnership Arrangement</i>	68
G8	<i>Data Sharing Protocol</i>	69
G9	<i>A graph to show if staff from both organizations only share the same counter area</i>	70
G10	<i>Feelings towards staff integration</i>	71
G11	<i>Service delivery in relation to services being provided under one roof</i>	76
G12	<i>Staff opinion when asked if they would like to see LCC and SLH services being delivered by a single organization</i>	77
G13	<i>Maintaining own brandings</i>	77
G14	<i>Level of job satisfaction enjoyed by LCC staff</i>	78
G15	<i>Level of job satisfaction enjoyed by SLH staff</i>	79

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research

Since 1999 there have been a myriad of changes in Local Government as a direct result of the Central Government White Paper – Modernising Government which sets out objectives for local authorities of ‘delivering public services to meet the needs of citizens, not the convenience of service providers’ and to ‘deliver efficient, high quality public services’ stating that ‘mediocrity would not be tolerated’. There have been additional Central Government initiatives such as Best Value (BV) legislation introduced in 1999 and superseded by Comprehensive Performance Assessments (CPA) in 2001, which aim to assess how far Local Authorities have progressed with their modernising agenda’s. Central Governments thrust to make councils more business like in their approach has resulted in a surfeit of modernising best practice changes that have been drawn from private and voluntary sector organisations.

During the past four years LCC has dramatically changed its operations and business strategy and has made great strides in improving how it provides services to its customers. In 1999 a new Chief Executive (David Henshaw) was appointed who had a clear vision on how services provided by LCC had to change and a new customer contact strategy was developed that focused its attention on the culture of the organisation. Sull DN (1999) states the most successful organisations are said to be those which have a common culture based on a set of core or shared values that give to the organisation its vision. Johnson & Scholes (2002) state, “A vision or strategic intent is the desired state of the organisation. It is an aspiration around which a strategist, perhaps a Chief Executive (David Henshaw), might seek to focus the attention and energies of members of the organisation”. A new executive management team emerged, and the nine existing directorates were merged into five new portfolio areas.

1.1.1 The One Stop Shops

A corporate vision and a new strategy for the council was established and the Customer Contact Agenda / strategy developed which offered the citizens of Liverpool access to council services via four main channels, one of which being the One Stop Shops (OSS's), offering face-to-face contact. OSS's in their current form are a relatively recent development in UK local authorities. A OSS can be defined as a single interface or point of contact used by an organization or organisations to interact with customers or clients (Ongaro 2004) to provide a variety of services.

In Liverpool, the term 'One-Stop-Shop' is used specifically to refer to face-to-face contact. Local authorities are multi-purpose organisations and OSS's provide a single point of customer access to a range of disparate functions within the organisation, from a base within a specific locality. In Liverpool, the model is also used as a gateway to other, non-local authority services, for example the Speke OSS and SLH partnership arrangement. Joyce (1999) argues that two thirds of British local authority chief executives believe the most important issue facing local government over the next three to five years is partnership building. Mintzberg however, argues the fact that better service delivery does not depend solely on the owner of the business/organisation, but on the bureaucracies and vision of the management. (Mintzberg on Management 1989:303-306). Again reinforcing Sull et.al's argument. LCC's OSS's have standardised and increased customer service, as well as access to council services, and are engaged in joint working and partnership working. They are breaking new ground, and have been customised to meet differences in demand in the communities they serve.

Customer service advisors who work in the OSS's are trained to a high standard, in all council services. As a result investment has been made both to the business environment and perhaps more importantly in the training and development of the OSS staff. **Table 1** overleaf details the Council Services offered across the OSS's.

Housing Benefit	Council Tax
Council Housing	Non Domestic Rates
Property Pool	Blue Badges
Electoral Registration	Registrars
Homelessness	Planning and Permissions
Licensing	Parking Permits
Fire Risk Assessments	Anti Social Behaviour
Environmental Issues	Street Lighting
Trading Standards	Domestic Violence
Supported Living	Education Awards

Table 1: A list of Council Services offered across the One Stop Shops

1.1.2 South Liverpool Housing

SLH is a housing company formed in October 1999, when LCC transferred over 4,000 of its properties in the Speke-Garston area of Liverpool whose main purpose is to provide and manage desirable homes for people who want to live in the Speke and Garston areas of Liverpool. As a social landlord, SLH is striving for quality, affordability and equality in everything it does. It recognizes the problems faced regularly by some of its customers and believes that along with offering good quality housing, providing access to services and facilities can help tackle these issues.

1.1.3 The Partnership Arrangement

Striving to improve access to services for the citizens of Liverpool, October 2002 saw the start of a public public partnership arrangement between LCC and SLH, in the form of the Speke OSS. This is the first of its kind in across England and Wales. At the Speke OSS, Customer Service teams from both organizations work along side each other, delivering a wide range of council and housing services to local residents.

Lynch (2003) suggests to ensure long-term survival, an organisation must take the supplies it brings in, add value to these through its operations and then deliver its output to the customer. Two of the OSS's, which are located in Wavertree and Garston, have added value by partnering and sharing building facilities with the Library Service Area. However taking this partnership one step further the only OSS to have partnered with an external public agency is the Speke OSS, which has partnered with SLH. Such a partnering strategy has also reduced running costs. Porter argues that being the lowest cost producer allows above average profits without having to charge a higher price. (Www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/abstract).

Initial research showed that the management of LCC's customer contact was uncoordinated, inflexible, inefficient and unresponsive to customer needs. (**See appendix 1 – Transcribed Interview with the OSS Head of Service**). The council held little customer intelligence and information that did exist was retained within silos and not shared. As previously mentioned, to combat this LCC embarked on its Customer Contact Strategy. Around the same time, SLH was looking at ways to improve its own service delivery.

During an interview with the OSS Head of Service held (1st October 2004), it is clear that LCC's remit when developing the OSS's was to incorporate partner agencies. A meeting

was held at the Town Hall with five registered social landlords (RSL's). Initially some of the RLS's showed resistance to the idea of partnering with LCC due to the poor reputation in service delivery that LCC had previously been renowned for, and felt that they could provide a better service independently. SLH however recognised the changes and improvements, which had been made since 1999 and were eager to partner with LCC.

An interview was also conducted with SLH's Customer Services Manager (2nd November 2004), in order to identify the drivers behind the decision to partner with LCC (**appendix 2**). SLH were looking for new premises and felt the partnership arrangement would give a real opportunity to develop their front line services and give an excellent customer service. Both LCC and SLH have a shared ethos of "putting the customer at the heart of everything we do". Prior to moving into the Parklands complex, SLH were based in very poor run down accommodation. This constrained the level of customer service, which could be given. It was felt that by partnering with LCC, not only would staff have new state of the art office facilities but also the residents of Speke would gain a much better customer service. This partnership arrangement would therefore act as a driver to review the strategy and devise a completely different way of delivering customer service. An opportunity was seen to work closely with LCC to deliver a Housing Benefit service to SLH tenants and to give the customer a more "joined up" service in being able to resolve all council enquiries under one roof.

In the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation, Speke ranks as the most deprived ward in Liverpool (out of 33) and the second most deprived ward in England (from 8,414). (SLH Customer Charter 2004). Prior to the establishment of the partnership arrangement, local residents would have needed to travel ten miles in order to access council services in person. SLH had considered LCC's OSS's to have a good reputation, professional image, were very customer focused and felt that their staff could therefore learn a lot, by absorbing these elements across to their own customer service delivery.

Robbins (1992) suggests that the prime forces for change within organisations derive from forces acting within their environment. (Brooks and Weatherston 2000 page 7). LCC is at the forefront of driving forward a radical agenda for modernisation to bring about technological changes. This piece of research therefore focuses on the public, public partnership arrangement between the Speke OSS and SLH.

When entering into the partnership, it was envisaged that both sets of staff would work as one generic team which would enable a seamless service to be provided to the customer. In order to achieve this it was also envisaged staff would participate in regular joint team meetings, role-swapping / shadowing, training events, information exchanges, develop and share working practices and protocols, and share staff facilities. At the same time it was important to retain corporate identities, which would facilitate a new joint “culture” for the OSS / SLH partnership.

In order to assist customers having their enquiries dealt with at the one point of contact, a unique “data sharing protocol” was drawn up between the two organizations. This is a legal document that helps overcome some of the strict data protection legislation. Prior to this document being signed by both organisations, data protection law would not allow for the sharing of information to be carried out between the two bodies, and this hindered customer service as it prolonged the length of a customer’s enquiry.

1.2 Research Question

This Research Proposal intends to analyse the success of the partnership arrangement, where success is taken to mean beneficial to staff in order to meet organisational goals. It is important however to take into account that people do have different expectations and thus this may be reflective in their judgment and perception as to whether they feel the

partnership is successful. This study poses and attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How has the partnership arrangement managed to enable staff to provide a seamless service to customers?
2. What evidence is there to suggest that a single culture has developed between staff from both organizations?

In order to answer the research questions the below areas, outlining any limitations, shall be investigated using qualitative research methods:

1. Bridging cultural differences
2. How much benefit do the staff from both organisations feel they gain from “joined up” working in the partnership, and how could things be improved for the future

1.3 Justification for the Research

The drive to deliver excellent public services has been at the heart of the Government’s agenda since its election in 1997. For local government, there has been two major pieces of legislation, with a third currently passing through parliament, and numerous green papers, white papers and consultation documents. www.odpm.gov.uk

For some time it has been clear that traditional methods of service delivery may no longer be the best route for local public services and there is a growing expectation from a range of sources that local councils should be delivering their services through a range of different mechanisms. In particular through partnerships with other local agencies, the voluntary sector and private sector partners. The focus on local councils’ roles is shifting from one of service deliverer to community leader. (OdPM) www.odpm.gov.uk

The Government has established the Strategic Partnering Taskforce in September 2001 which aims to help local authorities to develop the resource and skills needed to successfully secure improvement in local services by working in partnership with others. Elements have been identified which could be incorporated into the development of a tool kit, which can be used for successful future partnered OSS's.

Although Central Government is a main driver for partnership arrangements, LCC is also supportive of partnership arrangements. The author is in a unique position in carrying out this research due to being the lead officer in managing the partnership arrangement from its inception.

1.4 Methodology

The methodology will take a phenomenological and positivist approach. Speke OSS and SLH partnership arrangement will be used as a case study in order to answer the research question.

The primary research consisted of two semi structured interviews with the OSS Head of Service and SLH's Customer Services Manager. Following analysis, a questionnaire was devised and sent out to all Customer Service Advisors (CSA's) from both organisations for completion. Findings from both sets of data were analysed and utilised for a follow up focus group session consisting of Team Managers from both organisations. The findings from the focus group were compared with the findings from the semi structured interviews and questionnaires. A conceptual model was developed and tested against another public/public partnership arrangement, that being the merger between University College Chester and Warrington Collegiate Institute, discussed fully in **appendix 7**. This is discussed in appendix A. A focus group of LCC MBA students were also asked to complete a small questionnaire in order to capture their views in determining if the conceptual model suggested by the author would benefit LCC when entering into future

public/public partnership arrangements. The analysis allowed for cross triangulation of the findings.

This research proposal carries an opportunity to provide fresh insight in this topic area. The author has linked theory to practice by linking the questions asked in the questionnaire regarding the recommended elements of a successful partnership identified in the literature review in chapter two. The methodology is further justified in Chapter 3.

1.5 Outline of the chapters

Chapter 1 gives an overview of the background to the research, outlining the Customer Contact Strategy, the OSS's and the partnership arrangement. Within this Chapter the research question is described and justified. The methodological approach taken is briefly mentioned and the main terms used in the dissertation are fully outlined.

Chapter 2 contains a literature review (that has been written), which reviews the parent disciplines of the research problem. A theoretical foundation has been built giving (the reader) a broad foundation upon which the research is based. The literature review has unearthed areas, which require further research.

Chapter 3 describes the major methodology used to collect the data in order to answer the research question. Alternative types of methodologies have been described and the preferred research method explained and justified, linking back to the research question.

Chapter 4 gives a comprehensive overview of the data collection method adopted, the research design is described in detail and analyses of the findings are given. From the findings of the research and the literature review the author has been able to develop a conceptual model called the "CHANGED" Model. This model is defined in Chapter 3 section 3.4.2.

Chapter 5 outlines the conclusions about the research question, bringing together all of the previous chapters and has aimed to explain to the reader how successful (or not) the chosen research methodology fitted the problem. The findings for each research question have been summarized from Chapter 4 and explained within the context of prior research described in Chapter 2. The analysis from a mini case study described in **appendix 7** has been examined and elements of the “CHANGED” model have been considered for use within public/public partnership arrangements. The conclusions are based on findings alone from the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

Chapter 6, the final chapter of the dissertation describes the recommendations from the research, which are based solely on the conclusions. The dissertation is one of a theoretical nature, therefore eradicating the requirement for an implementation plan to be included.

1.6 Defining the Terms

Councils are expected to work in partnership with one and other, other local public services and the private sector to deliver the “joined up” services citizens deserve, in a cost-effective manner. (OdPM) (February 2001)

E.government delivering Local Government Online (OdPM) (February 2001) states that authorities should provide through their IEG statement:

“Evidence that the scope for joint investment with neighbouring authorities and service providers is being actively explored (partnerships can be district/district, county/district and/or council/other public sector)”

The ODPM recommend that for the development of front office integration partnered organisations should be able to evidence:

1. Some services designed to provide “joined-up” answers to customer queries across multiple agencies in a single transaction.
2. Information integrated between services to minimise the need for customer transactions and incorporating appropriate data protection protocols.
3. Some services planned jointly to operate across multiple agencies; some joint service delivery, joint procurement and joint use of access points.

1.6.1 “Joined up working”

Joined-up Government depends on integrating information across individual agencies, and then delivering that information into the hands of key workers in the field.

The OdPM states that the Government has set an ambitious modernisation agenda for the public services. Its 1999 White Paper, *Modernising Government*, stated that it wanted public services to be focused firmly on users, not providers. Achieving this means making services fit more closely with people’s lives. Services are expected to become more responsive to user needs, and the ways they are delivered more flexible and user-centred. *Modernising Government* has been followed by a number of further White Papers and initiatives. These have laid out in greater detail what the Government expects its modernisation agenda to achieve across every area of the public services. The aim of the Speke OSS and SLH partnership is to deliver both Council and Housing services under one roof by a single interaction with a customer service advisor.

1.6.2 Organisational Culture

Organisational theorists began to apply the term culture to corporate/work situations over the past 20 years. Initially the term was used to describe the leadership practices and later in the 80’s management gurus defined culture in terms of symbols, slogans, heroes, rites, and rituals etc. www.onepine.info/mcult.htm

Prior to the partnership arrangement, LCC and SLH will have had their own unique cultures. Literature suggests that it will have been probably created unconsciously, based on the values of the top management or the founders or core people who build and direct each organisation. It is argued that culture can influence the decision-making processes, affect styles of management and what everyone determines as success.

“The way we do things around here” is a common definition of culture. However it oversimplifies the concept and misses powerful underlying concepts and processes.

www.opax.swin.edu.au Huczynski and Buchanan argue that it is better to regard culture as referring to the shared assumptions, beliefs, values and norms, actions as well as artefacts and language patterns. Cultures are collective beliefs that in turn shape behaviour.

Schein (1969) argues that culture has three levels, those being artefacts, espoused values and basic underlying assumptions. He argues that culture is the outcome of the shared experiences arising from an organisation’s attempts to resolve fundamental problems of adapting to the external world and achieving internal integration and consistency. This constructs a collective pool of knowledge that determines what is appropriate behaviour, directs understanding and gives guidance on how to resolve problems. www.tnellen.com

Similarly Morgan (1986) describes culture as shared meaning, shared understanding and shared sense making. He argues that culture must be understood as “an active, living phenomenon through which people create and recreate their worlds”. Both stress that culture is a dynamic, evolving process, not at all static. Their views also imply that key individuals have a crucial role to play in shaping and refining the culture.

Therefore the culture of an organisation is an amalgamation of the values and beliefs of the people in an organisation. It can be felt in the implicit rules and expectations of behaviour in an organisation where, even though the rules are not formally written down employees know what is expected of them. It is usually set by management whose decisions on policy usually set up the culture of the organisation. Literature suggests that the organisational culture usually has values and beliefs that support the organisational goals. The culture of the organisation, if it is positive and helpful can help to motivate staff or at least prevent them from becoming dissatisfied.

VCE Information Technology and Management Company, www.opax.swin.edu.au state that various factors in an organisation can contribute to the culture or climate, can affect the organisational culture on an individual or personal level, and suggest ways in which managers can create and maintain the desired climate/ culture. They state an organisation's culture needs to be managed in order to maintain a positive culture to ensure that it is maintained.

1.7 Summary

This chapter introduces the research problem and the research question. The research is justified through practical and theoretical grounds. Through the literature review it has been established that little academic theory has been written on a public/public partnership arrangement such as that of the Speke OSS and SLH. The evidence from the National OSS Bench marking club suggests that this type of arrangement is unique across England and Wales. The research is therefore justified and the findings from this study may be used as a proposal tool kit for the future development of OSS and public agency partnerships across other local authorities.

Due to limited theory being available around the subject matter, the research methodology consists of primary data collated through a phenomenological approach. Due to the time limits of the research, certain limitations will apply. This research will only be focusing on the success of the partnership from an employee's viewpoint. Customers will not be surveyed, as the sample size required in order for this piece of research to be unbiased or of value would be too great given the time constraint.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Although Chapter One touched on some of the literature surrounding partnerships and culture, it is apparent that little has been written around OSS partnerships, either as a generic model or in the form of a case study. It appears that the concept of OSS's first surfaced in Italy around the early nineties where changing governmental legislative and financial frameworks enabled local authorities to develop OSS's whereby various public agencies merged their diverse customer contact points to act as a single interface for the many small and medium sized businesses that operated in the country (Ongaro 2004).

Whilst emphasising the need to put the customer at the "heart of the organisation", similar to legislative changes in Italy, the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) and Best Value (BV) enabled local authorities in the UK to dramatically change the way in which services were delivered (such as in Liverpool) exploit the strategic potential of best value through partnership arrangements (Goss et al 1998).

The objectives of OSS's in Liverpool were to merge many of the front of house reception points into one single interface (or point of contact), develop a first point of contact resolution and increase efficiency and effectiveness of customer contact. This being achievable by joining up services, both with internal portfolios and partners, improved processes, changing culture and most importantly change the image and perception of the services provided by LCC to its many and varied customers.

Whilst government legislation has exposed public sector services to market forces, originally with compulsory competitive tendering in the 1980's and more latterly with the introduction of best value, authorities such as Liverpool have similarly been forced to change the way services are managed. These changes to service delivery in Liverpool, and nationally, are as much to do with changes to business processes as to the changes in

legislation and structure and it is recognised that business process re-engineering has played a major role in bringing about change and service improvement, (Hammer & Champy 2001), even if the best interests of the employees may not be served (Worrall et al 2000).

It could be similarly argued that, over the past four years, LCC has been recognised locally and nationally as being organisationally successful because of its change in strategy and the radical structure and business process transformation undertaken in many of its service areas. However, it is worth noting that wholesale, uncritical application of private sector models and ethos can be problematic given the fundamental differences between public and private sector organisations (Joyce 1998).

2.2 The Use of Partnerships in Service Delivery

Various authors including Leach, Stewart and Walsh 1994 describe the development of external networks to deliver services. Individual public organisations are set within a network of organisations in the public domain (Ranson & Stewart 1994:133). The basis of external networks is predominantly one of co-operation, enabling the realisation of the domains full potential. Further, Ranson & Stewart (1994:150) state inter-organisational management depends upon ‘the management of mutual influence’ rather than ‘the management of direct action’.

Leach et al (1994:63-66) argue that due to environmental influences, new patterns of ‘inter’-organisation operations are developing, based on:

1. **Interdependence** – effective operation has to take into account the role of others;
2. **Coupling** – how closely organisations relate to each other; and
3. **Network** – level of co-operation to build on complementary strengths.

According to Ongaro (2004) the purpose of the business-focused OSS's in Italy is 'to increase customer orientation of public entities' and to address a 'co-ordination gap among public organisations'. The Italian OSS's provide a 'single interface' between entrepreneurs and public administrators and 'increase co-ordination between public entities involved in regulatory management' (of businesses). Ongaro (2004) identifies that the implementation of OSS's has required the re-engineering of 'process management logics and techniques'. This is mirrored in the Speke OSS and SLH partnership.

Using the Italian OSS's for businesses, Ongaro (2004) suggests a model that relates the 'key enabling factors for the development of process management in the public sector' at the macro and micro levels. The macro level consists of the legal and cultural setting and the reform frame. The micro level consists of executive leadership; organisational culture; information and communication technologies. The model is shown overleaf in **Figure 1**.

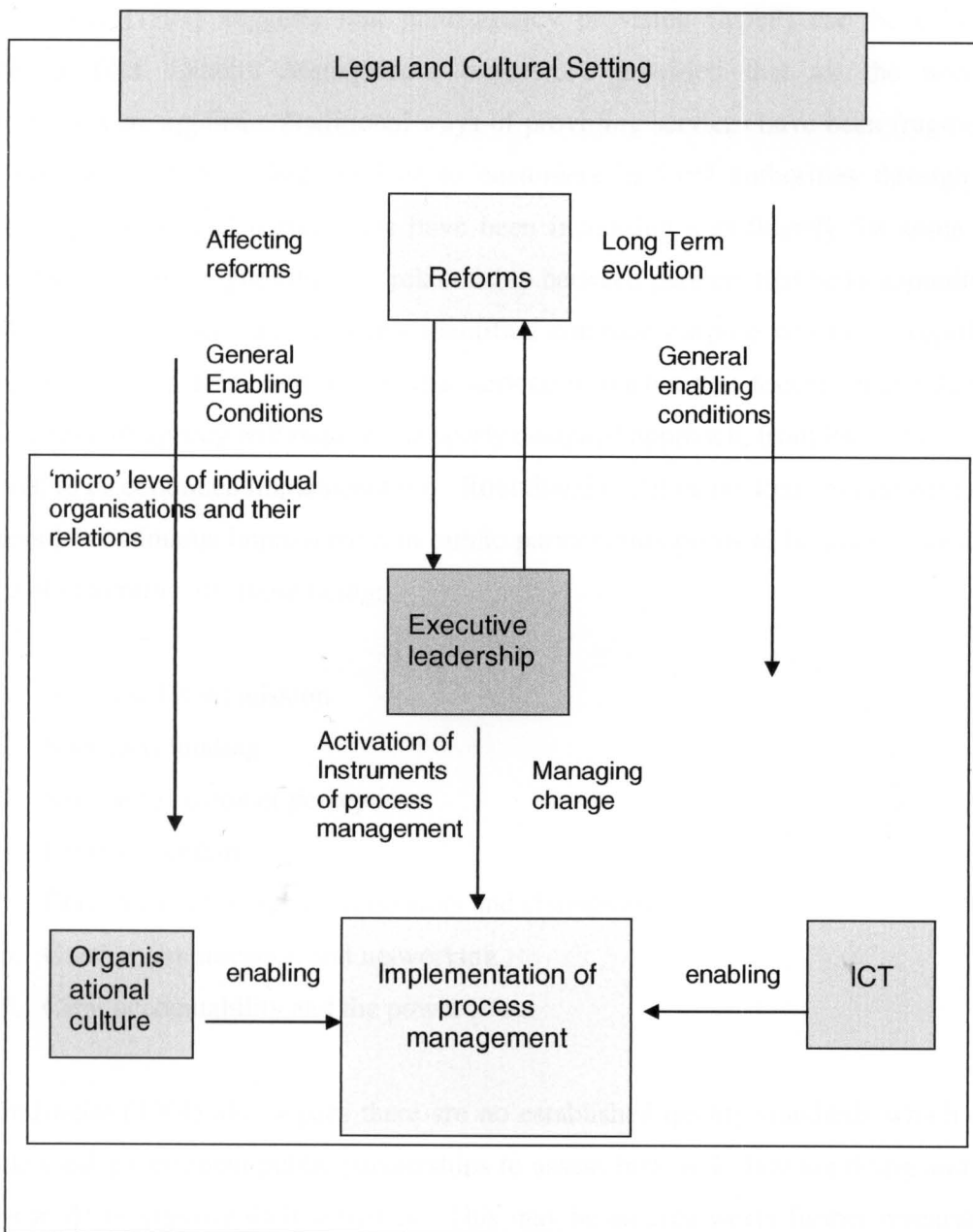


Figure 1: Enabling Factors for Process Management in the Public Sector

(Source: Ongaro, E. (2004). Process management in the public sector: the experience of one-stop shops in Italy. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 81-107.)

Rounthwaite (1994) suggests that multi-agency provision (MAP) can be developed within a Total Quality Management framework provided that all the necessary prerequisites are applied. Traditional ways of providing services have been fragmenting and new ways of providing services to customers in local authorities through joint working provision and partnerships have been increasing significantly for some time. Rounthwaite (1994) argues that any relationship between partners that lacks commitment, an agreed joint mission and a clearly identified common purpose will be susceptible to failure in the long term, and argues that service provision that touches more than one organization or agency will require a properly designed approach, from its inception right through to its continued implementation. Rounthwaite comments that commitment to the process of continuous improvement in public partnerships needs to be underpinned by a range of commitments, those being:

1. An agreed joint mission
2. Sustained funding
3. Satisfying customer perceptions
4. Clear leadership
5. Good liaison through co-ordinators and champions
6. Good communication and networking
7. Clear accountability and the power to act

Rounthwaite (1994) also argues there are no established quality standards which could enable local government public partnerships to assess how well they are doing and what they can do to improve their activities. This may be an area worth further research that this proposal may look to address. The author's own conceptual model is borne out of this research, is introduced in Chapter 3, section 3.4.2 and discussed fully in Chapter 5.

Bryans (1999) discussed a partnership between a local authority and a university to jointly provide a management development programme for a group of new managers reinforcing Rounthwaite's argument that for partnerships to work effectively,

commitments from both organisations are required and learning and development is not a one way process. Bryans (1999) also argues that it is people who make and sustain partnerships and individuals must feel a benefit to themselves as well as to the organization. The research carried out in this proposal aims to draw out this factor.

When the Speke OSS and SLH partnership developed in October 2002, different organisational cultures were apparent. Fuller and Vassie (2002) not only suggest that effective partnerships depend on establishing adequate levels of trust and commitment, again reinforcing theories from Rountwaite (1994) and Bryan's (1999) but also the success of partnerships is dependent on the alignment and maturity of the organisation's cultures, and suggest, therefore, that potential partners should assess and take account of their organizational cultures in partnership arrangements.

2.3 Alignment between the Organisational Cultures

Academics suggest that over the next five years there will be a focus on Public/Public partnerships and state the public sector have bureaucratic cultures to overcome and feel that a lot of plenary thought is required for such partnerships to be successful. Professor Robert Dixon (2004). MBA Seminar Liverpool.

Fuller et.al (2002) have developed an assessment framework that provides a measure of the maturity and alignment of organizational cultures, which can be adapted for use in the Speke OSS and SLH partnership arrangement (**Table 2** page 35). In addition to the specific alignment strategies in the framework, Fuller et.al. also suggest several general ways which organizations can improve cultural alignment within partnership arrangements. These are:

- The sharing of goals
- Culture
- Learning
- Effort
- Information sharing

Although cultural and organisational differences are obvious sources of tension, Fuller et.al.(2002) suggests partners may still co-operate successfully if those differences are acknowledged and constructively overcome. Fuller et.al have emphasized the importance of creating cultural alignment in partnerships, however Bresnen and Marshall (2002) consider that discussions about partnership approaches can be mainly prescriptive with very limited empirical evidence presented to support any discussion. Furthermore they stress the need for more systematic research, which would enable the efficiency and effectiveness of partnering approaches to be assessed.

The framework presented overleaf defines a method of assessing cultural maturity and alignment between partnering organizations whereby differences and similarities in the cultures of partnering groups can be assessed and evaluated. The model also identifies those cultural indicators where improvement strategies are required in order to increase the level of maturity and/or alignment and hence the probability of success of the partnership arrangement. Fuller et.al (2002) argue that the assessment framework presented in **Table 2** overleaf has been shown to be capable of measuring differences in the alignment and maturity of the safety cultures that exist between different parts of an organization. They also argue that cultural changes can be achieved through a change in management style, arguing that the framework may also have a wider application for the general evaluation of organizational cultures within partnering arrangements.

Evaluation Zone	Predicted success for the partnership
A	Likely
B	Probable
C	Possible
D	Unlikely

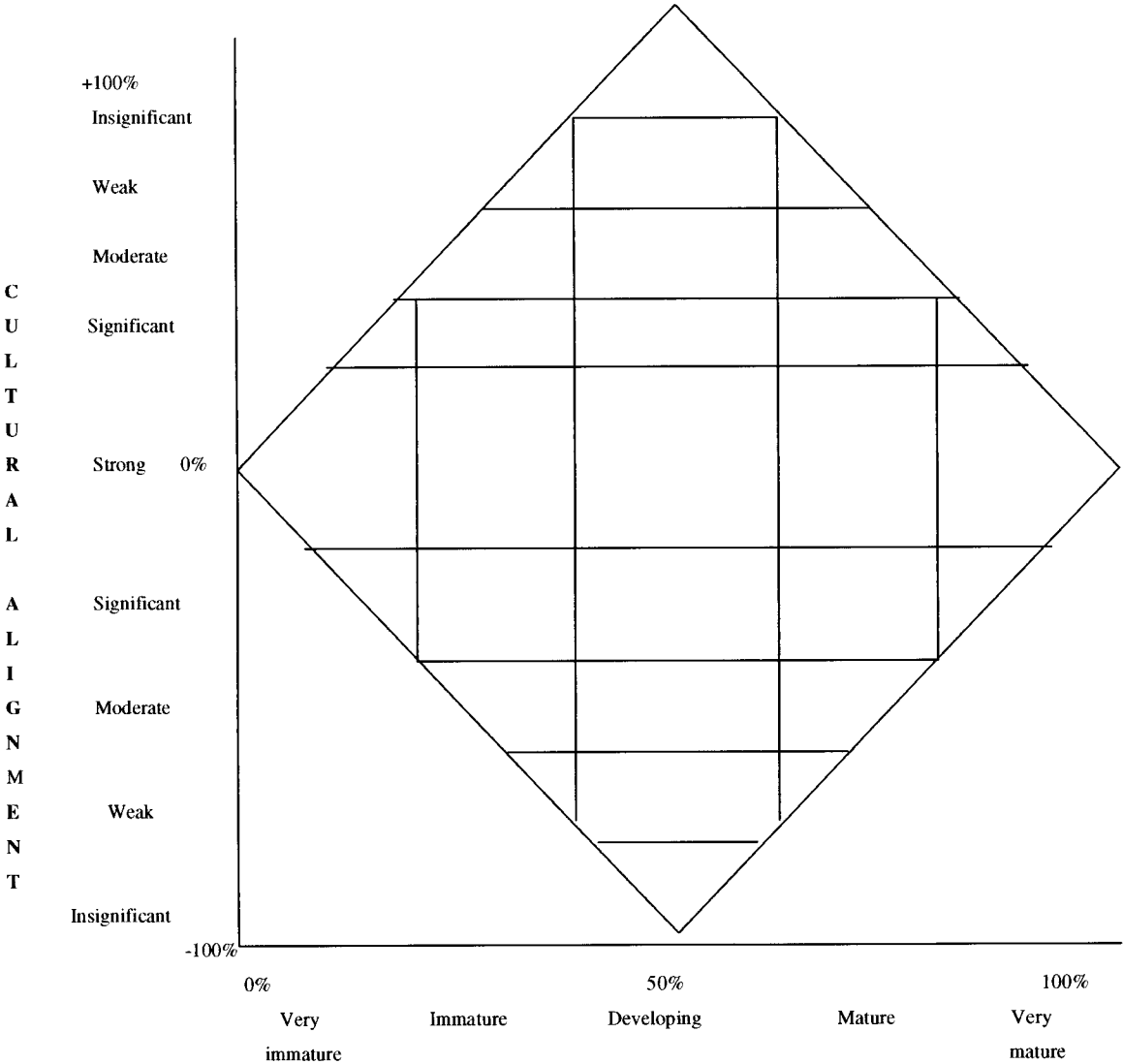


Table 2: Evaluation Zones for the Assessment of Cultural Maturity and Alignment
Source: Fuller and Vassie (2002) Assessing the maturity and alignment of organizational culture in partnership arrangements. *Journal of Employee Relations*, Vol 24, issue 5.

Edward's and Shaoul (2003) argue that partnerships are the government's preferred methods of procuring public sector services, stating the policy is usually justified in terms of delivering value for money. Edwards et.al applied a case study approach to examine how risk transfer, which is at the heart of the rationale for partnerships, works in practice. The case study concluded that the contracts failed to transfer risk in the way that had been expected and consequently the cost fell on the public agency. This was mainly due to the risks and costs being dispersed in unexpected ways and therefore public accountability was obscured.

Reinforcing the above findings, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (OdPM) have discovered that for some authorities, the long term commitment to a single partner for such a large proportion of essential services is seen as high risk. Many recognise the benefits of strategic partnering but do not have the confidence to go forward with a "big bang" approach.

The OdPM argue that partnerships which have taken an incremental approach have adopted a low-risk stage-by-stage strategy, allowing confidence in the partnership to be built up before moving onto the next level. The OdPM also recommends if the strategic fit between partners is acceptable and partners can work together at the strategic level then an economic case exists for all partners. The OdPM argues it is essential for these factors to be in place for Strategic Service Delivery Partners (SSP's) to work, such as that of the Speke OSS and SLH partnership. See **figure 2** overleaf.

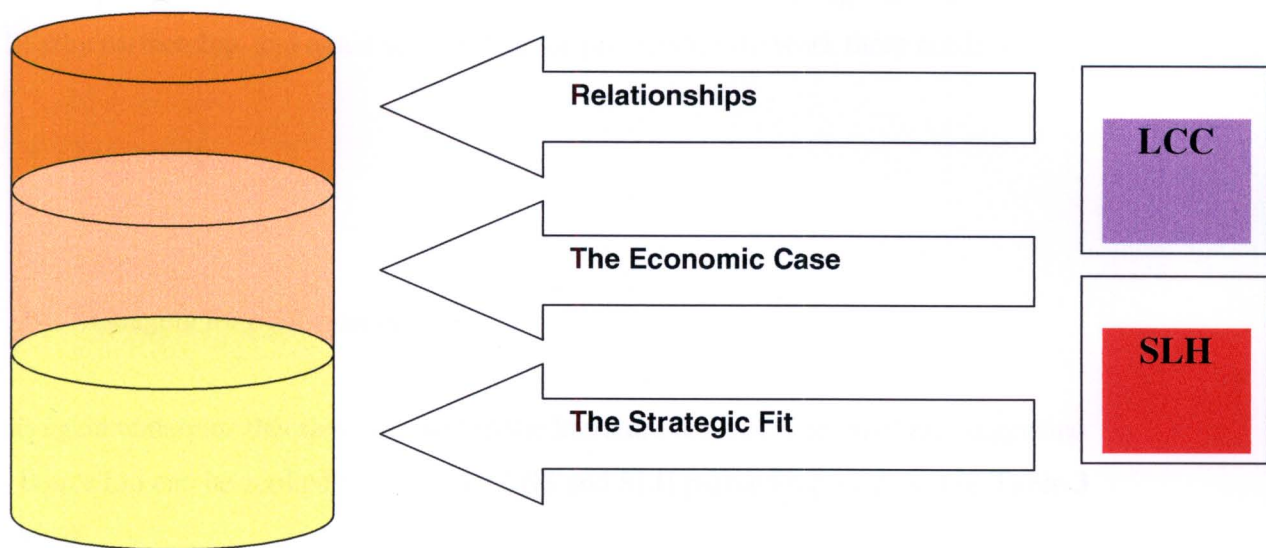


Figure 2: The Essential Building Blocks for the One-Stop Shop and South Liverpool Housing's Joint Working

Source: www.odpm.gov.uk

In terms of rethinking service delivery, SSP's have emerged through initiatives of leaders and senior executives in innovative local authorities (www.odpm.gov.uk). It could be argued that the Speke OSS and SLH partnership has developed through the innovation of LCC's Chief Executive David Henshaw and has followed the SSP model as outlined by the OdPM.

The local authority has developed the specification for working jointly with SLH and investment has been made by both LCC and SLH. The aim could be to eventually deliver the service jointly through integrated IT systems as both organisations have shared objectives. A "tool kit" has been designed by Educe Ltd (www.lgpartnerships.com) in

order for partnerships to be able to carry out a “quick health check” against eight tests of a healthy partnership, and again suggest that for partnerships to work there needs to be:

- Leadership
- Trust
- Learning
- Managing for performance

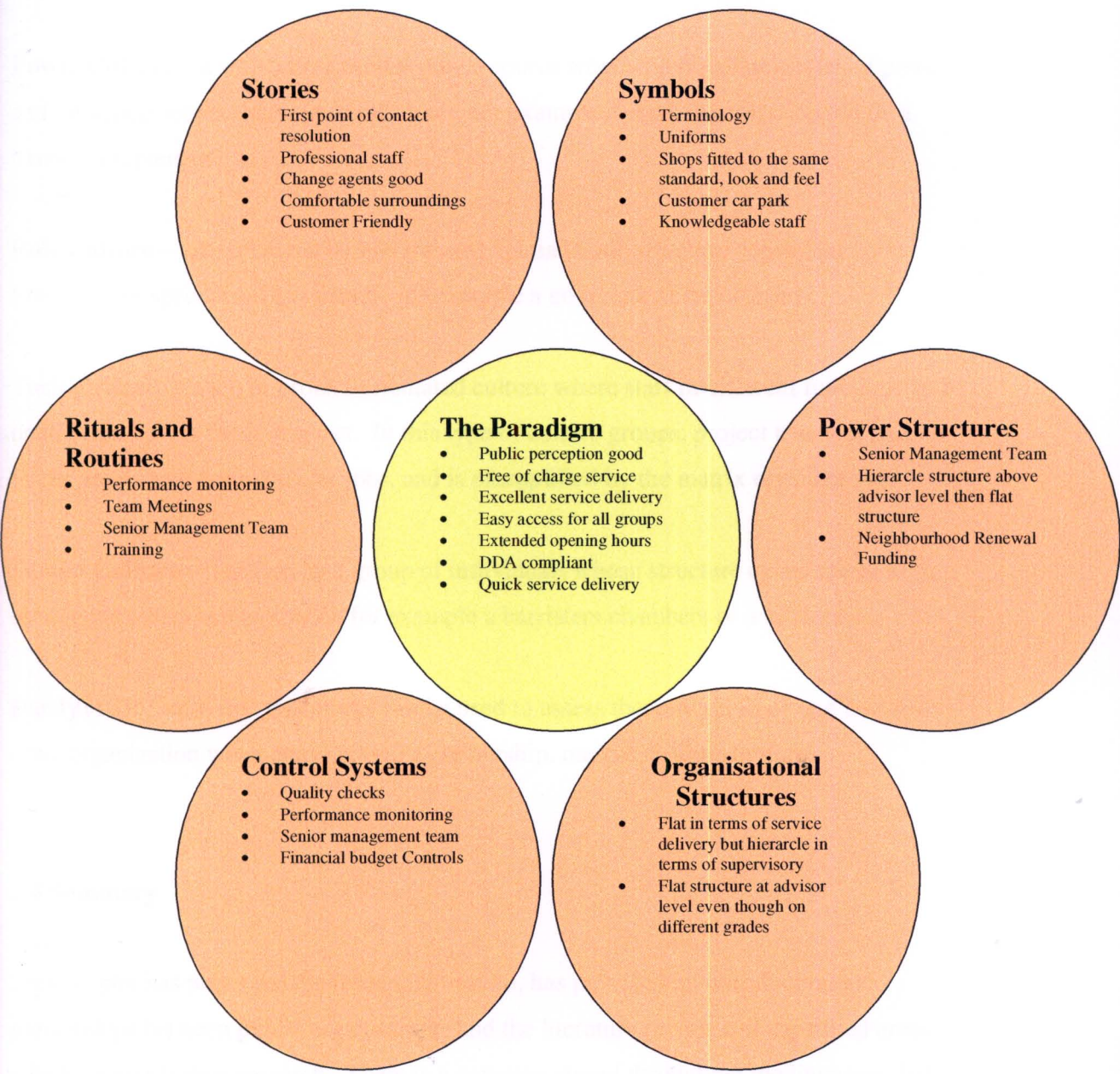
This again underpins theories from within the literature review. The “tool kit” suggested by Educe Ltd can be applied to the Speke OSS and SLH partnership as shown in **Table 3** overleaf.

		Never	Sometimes	Often
1	Partners can demonstrate real results through collaboration		X	
2	Common interest supersedes partner interest			X
3	Partners use “we” when talking about partner matters	X		
4	Partners are mutually accountable for tasks and outcomes		X	
5	Partners share responsibilities and rewards	X		
6	Partners strive to develop and maintain trust		X	
7	Partners are willing to change what they do and how they do it		X	
8	Partners seek to improve how the partnership performs			X

Table 3: Eight Tests of a Healthy Partnership mapped against OSS and SLH Partnership
Source: Educe Ltd www.lgpartnerships.com

Johnson and Scholes (1999) outline a paradigm as a set of assumptions held relatively in common and taken for granted in an organization, and is likely to be linked to other aspects of organisational culture such as rituals, stories and everyday routines. They advise that the cultural paradigm effectively filters reality in the organisations perception of its environment. **Figure 3** overleaf shows the cultural web of the OSS and SLH partnership. Harding and Long (1998) argue that an organizations culture is strongest when all factors are integrated and contribute positively to the paradigm, often giving stability and confidence to the organization and it people.

Figure 3 - The Cultural Web of the One Stop Shop and South Liverpool Housing's Partnership



Source: Johnson and Scholes (2002) Exploring Corporate Strategy (6th ed) Financial Times prentice Hall.

Handy (1985) argues there are four principal, identifiable types of culture in organisations, those being:

Power Culture – a web with a central power source from which radiate circles of power and influence connected by specialist lines, for example a small organization led by a strong entrepreneur.

Role Culture – characterized by hierarchical, bureaucratic structure dependent upon functional or specialist departments, for example a government department .

Task Culture – a job or project-orientated culture where staff in different functions and on different levels freely interact. In this type of culture groups, project teams or task forces are formed for particular jobs, and is exemplified by the matrix organization.

Person Culture – typified by a group of individuals whose structure exists solely to service the individual members, for example a barristers chambers or a kibbutz.

Handy (1985) states that this model can be used to assess the cultural fit of one's own and other organization when entering into a partnership, merger or joint venture.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has presented the research question, has provided an introduction to partnerships between public organisations and the literature review has unearthed areas which require further research. There is a common strand throughout the literature that indicates that for partnerships between public agencies to be effective, certain caveats must be in place. These range from strong leadership, trust, common goals, culture, performance management, learning and information sharing to name but a few. This

research aims to look in detail at these areas, providing fresh insight into the subject area and demonstrates the findings of the research are valid through triangulation.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As Chapter One has described, the Speke OSS and SLH partnership is unique in the sense that it is the first of its kind throughout the local authorities of England and Wales. It is envisaged that the research methodology adopted will be successful in answering the research question. The dissertation however concludes that further research is required due to the time constraints in which the project is to be complete.

Public/Public partnerships are very much an emerging area with very little literature available around the subject. Therefore if the main issues, which are impacting on the Speke OSS and SLH partnership, can be identified from this piece of research, the author will have moved forward in this area. From linking the research undertaken in this project, to theory which has already been written, key elements of a preferred conceptual model have been identified and developed into a tool kit for future Public/Public partnership arrangements. This model has been tested against another Public/ Public partnership, that being the merger arrangement between Chester University College and Warrington Collegiate Institute (**see appendix 7**). To further test the validity of the model, a focus group of LCC MBA students have been asked to complete a short questionnaire.

3.2 Research Methods and Philosophies

There are many alternative methodologies, which can be used within the field of research. However the most appropriate type to use depends on the research being undertaken, the paradigm based on peoples philosophies and assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2002) Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) define research as something that people undertake in order to find out

things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge. A researcher's philosophy depends on the way they think about the development of knowledge, this in turn affects the way in which research is under taken. Saunders et.al (2003) state that three views about research process dominate the literature, those being:

Positivism – research undertaken will be dominant in the natural science, having an emphasis on a highly structured methodology to facilitate replication and on quantifiable observations that lend themselves to statistical analysis.

Interpretivism (phenomenological) – researchers embarking on this method are critical of the positivist tradition and argue that the social world of business and management is far to complex to lend itself to theorising by definite laws in the same way as the physical sciences.

Realism – is based on the belief that a reality exists that is independent of human thoughts and beliefs.

The positivist and phenomenological approaches to research are more commonly understood to be quantitative and qualitative paradigms. **Table 4** below identifies the type of research information assigned to each of these paradigms.

Positivistic Paradigm	Phenomenological Paradigm
Quantitative	Qualitative
Objectivist	Subjectivist
Scientific	Humanistic
Experimentalist	Interpretivist
Traditionalist	

Table 4: Alternative terms for the main research paradigms (Hussey & Hussey 1997)

With in these two main paradigms there are differing assumptions and principals outlined by Creswell (1994) in **Table 5** below. These assumptions will be used to illustrate the research method adopted for the Speke OSS and SLH partnership study.

Assumption	Question	Quantitative	Qualitative
Ontological	What is the nature of reality?	Reality is objective and singular, apart from the researcher.	Reality is subjective and multiple as seen by participants in the study.
Epistemological	What is the relationship of the researcher to that being researched?	Research is independent to that being researched.	Researcher interacts with that being researched.
Axiological	What is the role of values?	Value free and unbiased.	Value laden and biased.
Rhetorical	What is the language of research?	Formal based on set definitions. Impersonal voice. Use of accepted quantitative words.	Informal Evolving decisions Personal voice. Use of accepted qualitative words
Methodological	What is the process of research?	Deductive process Cause and effect Static design – categories isolated before study Context free generalisations leading to prediction, Explanation and understanding Accurate and reliable through validity and reliability	Inductive process Mutual simultaneous shaping of factors Emerging design – Categories identified during research process Context bound Patterns, theories developed for understanding Accurate and reliable through verification

Table 5: Assumptions of the two main paradigms (Creswell 1994 p.5.)

From the research carried out with OSS and SLH customer service advisors and managers, a more qualitative approach has been taken. This takes into consideration the epistemological and ontological assumptions. The study is dealing with the humanistic aspects of research as the researcher interacts with the staff taking part in the study during interviews and focus groups.

Due to the relationship of the researcher with those taking part in the study, it was necessary to ensure the questionnaire was anonymous. Relating this to the axiological assumption, value could remain unbiased thus providing greater reliability and validity. The research has taken a phenomenological approach. There is a need to investigate quantitative data that is supported through a richness of detail, which is provided to obtain a clear interpretation of respondent's views.

The case study approach was chosen as the most appropriate method in order to answer the research question for various reasons. Initially it was necessary to carry out interviews with the OSS Head of Service and SLH's Customer Services Manager in order to ascertain both organizations drivers for the partnership development. The findings from these interviews then played an integral role in the questionnaire development. The questionnaire was distributed to staff from both organizations who were asked to complete it anonymously, in order to gain as truthful response as possible.

3.3 Application of Methodology

The approach taken was to examine the Speke OSS and SLH partnership as a case study. Robson (2002:178) defines a case study as "a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence". A case study approach also has considerable ability to generate answers to questions "why?" as well as the "what?" and "how?" questions. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003). The research seeks to identify

main issues relating to the Speke OSS and SLH partnership, those being issues around has service delivery improved, are staff fully integrated, do they work together to provide a seamless service through “joined up” working and what evidence is there to suggest a single culture has developed. . The case study approach will focus on understanding the issues present within a single setting, that being the Speke OSS and SLH partnership.

Table 6 below outlines the author’s research assumptions adopted for this study.

Research Undertaken	Assumption
Interviews with OSS Head of service and SLH’s Customer Services Manager	Qualitative/ Methodological – Emerging themes and categories identified during interviews.
Questionnaires with CSA’s	Ontological – Reality is subjective and multiple as seen by CSA’s during the study.
Focus group with Team Managers	Epistemological – The researcher has interacted with the Team Managers

Table 6 Source: Author (2005) Assumptions of research undertaken

3.4 Process

The research undertaken has been of mainly primary data collection. This is partly due to little secondary data being available, as limited literature has been written relating to Public/Public partnerships. In order to gain an overview from all staff involved, various methods of data collection have been used.

Initially two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the OSS Head of Service and SLH’s Customer Service Manager. The interviews gave an opportunity to explore in depth attitudes towards the partnership and examine the main drivers behind the partnership, and to ask searching questions. Full transcripts of these interviews can be seen in **appendices 1 and 2**.

The second stage of research involved formulating and designing a questionnaire to be completed anonymously by customer service advisors. An example of the questionnaire can be seen in **appendix 3**. The questionnaire was formulated around the research aims and objectives and from data collected from the semi-structured interviews.

Following the questionnaire, it was important to gain the views of the Team Managers from both organisations. A focus group was conducted, the findings of which can be seen in **appendix 5**. Findings from all three data collection methods were then triangulated in the analysis.

Both organisations have twelve Customer Service Advisors. Therefore in order to identify a suitable sample frame it was necessary to send out the questionnaire to all twenty-four advisors. This ensured the sample was unbiased and large enough to give meaningful results. Saunders et.al.(2003). Had the numbers of staff involved been higher then a random sampling technique would have been adopted ensuring that the sample would be representative of the population of interest.

Once the questionnaire had been completed and returned the findings were analysed and the main points extracted. From this data, questions were devised for the Team Manager focus group. It was important to obtain the views of Team Managers who had been working in the partnership since its conception. Two of SLH's original Team Managers had since left the organisation. The author felt it would be beneficial to gain the views of these staff and therefore invited the afore mentioned to take part. The analysis from all sets of data collected has been represented in both graphical and descriptive formats in Chapter Four.

From the analysis, and theory available around successful partnerships, the author has developed a conceptual framework for the future development of Public/Public partnerships, called the "CHANGED" model detailed below:

Commitment

Holistic

Attitude

Networking

Generic

Engage

Develop

Source: Author (2005) Seven elements to a Successful Partnership

3.4.1 Research Design and Data Collection

The OSS Head of Service was interviewed on 1st October 2004 and SLH's Customer Services Manager was interviewed on 2nd November 2004. The interviews allowed the author to ascertain each managers views on how they felt the arrangement was, or was not enabling "joined up" working between the two sets of staff, and if they intended for a single culture to develop. The interviews were semi-structured with basic questions being prepared beforehand. (**Appendices 1 and 2**)

The interviewees were given the opportunity to expand on and add to the topics involved. This ensured that the questions prepared could be posed in the same way and consideration given to interviewees having the same understanding of the question (stimulus equivalence). Both interviews were taped to ensure all the information was captured for later analysis. Transcripts of the two interviews were then (**appendices 1 and 2**) analysed for themes to be used as a comparator against data from staff questionnaires.

The second stage of data collection, the formulation of a questionnaire (**appendix 3**), was sent out to all CSA's from both organizations on 13th November 2004. The

formulation of the questions was borne out of the findings from the interviews and also based around the research question. A pilot was sent to two CSA's from both organizations, in order to test for reliability, assess the validity of the questionnaire and to ensure staff understood the format of the questionnaire. The pilot questionnaires were received back within a week, and evidenced that no further changes were necessary to the questionnaire format. The questionnaires were then sent to CSA's with a lucid explanation and reasons why the questions were being asked. It was explained that the questionnaires were anonymous and the findings would only be used for the intention of the study. The questionnaires were however coded in order for them to be linked to either LCC or SLH staff for analysis purposes, but not to individual respondents. Of the twenty-four questionnaires sent out nine were returned from LCC staff and six from SLH staff.

When designing the questionnaire thought was given to the survey objectives, the types of questions asked, the phrasing and order of questions and the length and complexity of the questions. A mixture of open questions, list questions, category questions and a Likert-style rating scale was used. It was necessary to bear in mind the tendency for respondents to agree rather than disagree (response acquiescence) therefore there was a need to mix positive with negative questions in the Likert scale to keep CSA's giving thought to their answers. The data collected was then analysed and has been represented in a graphical format, to add interest for the reader, in Chapter Four.

The third stage of the research involved the current and previous Team Managers from both organizations attending a focus group, held on 10th January 2005. The questions asked were again posed around the research question and emerging themes of the analysis from the two interviews with the OSS Head of Service and SLH's Customer Services Manager, and the questionnaires. The interview was again tape recorded and later transcribed (**appendix 5**), with an assurance given around staff confidentiality and anonymity. The analysis from the focus group allowed the author to triangulate the findings from the previous interviews and the analysis of the questionnaires.

3.4.2 Additional Research

Borne out of the analysis of the afore mentioned data collection and the theory relating to successful partnerships, as mentioned in Chapter One section 1.4, the researcher established a conceptual framework named the “CHANGED” model. This is discussed fully in Chapter Five. In order to test the validity of the model and give substance to its development it was necessary to test the hypothesis against another Public/Public partnership arrangement. This partnership arrangement being the merger between University Chester College and Warrington Collegiate Institute. The findings of this research are presented in **appendix 7**. A further questionnaire was developed, which can be seen in **appendix 8**, and a group of LCC MBA students were asked to comment if they felt the model would be beneficial for LCC to adopt when entering into future public/public partnership arrangements.

3.5 Rejected Methods

Fisher (2004) distinguishes the difference between methods and methodologies as methodologies being the study of a whole academic field and methods being the way in which data is collected and analysed. Research methods differ according to their ontological assumptions and epistemological assumptions. Some methods are associated with a particular paradigm, however it is useful to think of these paradigms as being on a continuum. No one method is better than another, but merely a more appropriate approach depending on the research being undertaken.

For this study the positivist paradigm has been rejected as it would have been difficult to separate the employees involved in the research from their social contexts. The area of research undertaken has been mainly based around the staff’s perceptions of how successful they feel the partnership arrangement is. The positivist approach may also

impose constraints on the results gathered from a qualitative technique as the subject area is complex and cannot be restricted by a single measure.

In gathering data for this case study, data collection methods have included interviews, questionnaires and a focus group. Secondary data, which can be associated with a case study such as archived data, has been discounted for the reasons outlined in previous chapters. This is an emerging field and a partnership arrangement of this nature has not been embarked upon before in a local authority and therefore no archive data exists.

Although it is impossible to commence the research with out any preconceived ideas, the author has started with as few assumptions as possible. It will be the investigation, which guides the construction of theory.

3.6 Limitations

There have been some limitations to this research. The study has been restricted to only take into account success of the partnership arrangement from an employees view point and not that of a customers. A customers view point has not been explored as the sample size required in order for the findings to be unbiased or skewed would be too large given the time scale of this study. Due to the small number of CSA's working for both organizations, a higher return rate of questionnaires from SLH staff may have allowed for greater insight in establishing the main issues surrounding "joined up" working and a joint culture.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In the context of research, ethics refers to the appropriateness of the researchers behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subjects of work, or are affected by it. Saunders et.al (2003). Ethical considerations need to be thought out throughout all aspects of the research, not just at the data collection stage, but at the reporting stage as well. It is important to respecting the rights of the respondents used in the study considering the below code of ethics to ensure that the researcher does not transgress behavioural norms of the society:

- Recognition that the participation is voluntary
- Recognition that participants have the right to decline to answer a question or set of questions or to be observed in particular circumstances.
- Recognition that participants have control over the right to record any of their responses where use of a tape recorder is contemplated.
- Recognition that participants may withdraw at any time.
- Assurances will be provided about participant anonymity and data confidentiality
- Explanation of who will have access to the data collected

For this case study it was essential that ethical guidelines were followed as the researcher is a member of the OSS Senior Management Team. The OSS Head of Service and SLH's Customer Service Manager fully understood the ethical issues around data collection and were not concerned about maintaining anonymity. The staff who took part in the focus group were given assurances that their anonymity would not be compromised in any way and were assured that the findings from the research would only be used for the sole purpose of the research it was obtained for. Staff were asked if they had any objections to the focus group being tape recorded, again with an assurance that it would only be used for the purpose of the research and their identity would only be known to the researcher. An assurance was given that identification information would not be included in the typed transcript or printed in the dissertation.

3.8 Summary

A number of writers have suggested (Goetz and Lecompte, 1981; Rist, 1977) that most researchers who use the terms qualitative and quantitative imply the existence of a dichotomy. However, as previously mentioned it may be more accurate to think of these two approaches as different ends of a single continuum. As the awareness that qualitative and quantitative approaches are not antithetical to each other increases, there is a growing acceptance on the part of some quantitative researchers to use qualitative methods.

This chapter has offered an explanation of the various research philosophies and principles. The information gathered has been tested against empirical evidence and relative models to see if there is any correlation and identify any new emerging patterns from the information gathered. The authors own conceptual model has been devised and tested against another public/public partnership, which is referenced in **appendix 7**. The views of a focus group of LCC MBA students have been captured in an attempt to determine the future benefits this model may offer the organisation. The methodology and process used in the research have been discussed together with the identification of ethical issues impacting on the case study. The researcher has investigated the limitations to the study and has also provided an explanation of rejected methods.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Data was collected using several means for the purposes of this research which have been outlined in Chapter three. The first section of this Chapter sets out to analyse the information gathered from the initial interviews with the OSS Head of Service and the Customer Services Manager from SLH. The two managers were asked a series of questions about the drivers and objectives behind the partnership arrangement from both organizations, the reasons why each were chosen as a preferred partner, the long term objectives, future developments, and each manager's personal view around a “joined up” culture and providing a seamless service. These questions were asked in order to ascertain if the managers from both organizations shared the same initial and long-term objectives from the partnership arrangement.

The second stage of the research required the development of a questionnaire for the CSA's, utilising the findings from the interviews as a basis to structure relevant questions in order to answer the research question. This questionnaire (**appendix 3**) consisted of 15 questions in total, which were based around length of service, if staff had an understanding of the partnership arrangement, their feelings and thoughts around providing a seamless service to the customer and their feelings and thoughts as to whether they felt a single culture had developed between the two organizations. **The questionnaire received a healthy 75% return rate.**

From the findings of the questionnaire and the analysis of the semi structured interviews, a focus group was held between six Team Managers from both organisations. Following the findings of the research and linking this to literature available about the subject area, the author has discussed the development of the “CHANGED” model. Further research using Chester Business School and Warrington Collegiate Institute as a case study was borne out of the development of this model (**Appendix 7**).

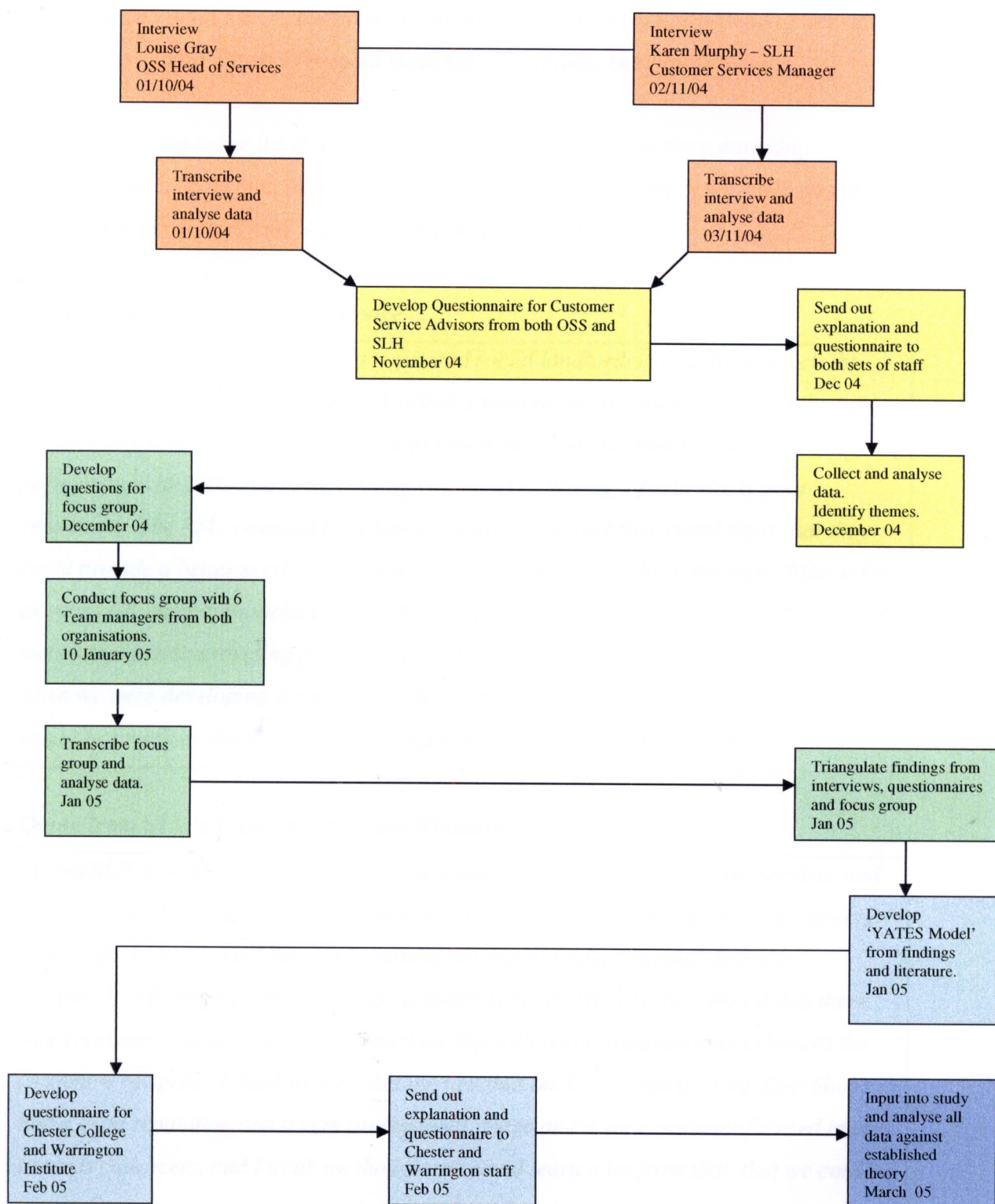


Figure 4: Source: Author (2005) Work Flow Analysis

4.2 Analysis - Semi Structured Interviews with the One Stop Shop Head of Service and South Liverpool Housing’s Customer Services Manager

It was interesting to see the different reasons for embarking upon the partnership arrangements held by both managers. Part of the OSS Head of Service’s remit was to develop the network of OSS’s and bring in partner agencies.

Quote from the OSS Head of Service

“ I approached four or five RSL’s (registered social landlords) at the time, which the stock was being transferred over to. I called a meeting in the Town hall and at the time because this was relatively new (the shops) the RSL’s were loathed to come into partnership with LCC due to LCC being perceived as having a particularly poor reputation. The RSL’s wanted to distance themselves so that they could show that they could provide a better service than Liverpool had been able to do in the past. After a few months LCC were approached by two RSL’s, one was CDS and the other was SLH. SLH were very open to providing partnership work with LCC and there was an opportunity when we were developing the PFI in Speke to bring together a number of agencies which would be practical due to cost savings and would encourage joined up services”.

Quote from SLH’s Customer Services Manager

“From SLH’s point of view it was an opportunity to develop our front line services and really help us deliver excellent customer service. We knew we were going to be moving to new offices so we used the opportunity of moving to really plan and devise a completely different way of delivering customer service. We also recognized that there was great opportunity of working in partnership with other organizations to benefit the customers of Speke. I think as well that we saw that the City Council’s One Stop Shops had a good reputation and a very professional image and a very customer focused image towards customers, and I think we thought we could learn a lot from that, that we could bring across to our own customer service delivery”.

It would appear that both organizations objectives were similar as both had a remit of providing excellent customer services and engaging in partnership working to provide “joined up” services.

Quote from the OSS Head of Service

“Liverpool saw the partnership as an opportunity to bring together the services in one point. There was an opportunity to work in partnership so that the customer would only have to go to one single access point”.

“By putting all services under one roof in a local area in a building that we knew customers could access, we felt would make access to services more convenient and easier for the customer”.

Generally both managers felt the objectives of the partnership arrangement first and foremost is to improve customer service delivery to increase customer satisfaction and to provide a more “joined up” service to the customer. Both managers also felt the importance of maintaining separate brandings and identities but felt the partnership arrangement has gone some way to increased “joined up” working, however the OSS Head of Service had reservations that a fully joined up service and culture is possible.

Quote from the OSS Head of Service

“I think it has been quite innovative doing the data sharing protocol, I think that has helped, but because we work to different masters its going to be quite difficult to really integrate the staff or to provide the same quality of service because we have our own standards and they have there’s. I think there will always be a bit of a them and us and its never going to be a true joined up service. It would be the same culture behind the scenes if you like, but I think that it is impractical really because the whole culture of Liverpool City Council and really that can’t have or hasn’t had any type of impact on SLH, so really they are always going to be working to their own agenda. It is very difficult to try and influence their culture really.”

Quote from SLH’s Customer Services Manager

“I think we introduced the data sharing protocol to try and get over some of the issues from data sharing. I think that now we have got over that we could look at may be starting to integrate some of the IT but I think it is important as well that we do still keep the identity of the two organisations. I don’t think either one of the organisations would particularly want to loose their own identity. I know at the moment it is still a sense of two different organisations under the same roof visually but I think the staff do actually work together behind the scenes more jointly”.

The analysis of data from the interviews indicated the drivers for the partnership for LCC and SLH were very different. For LCC the aim was to cut costs whilst improving the customer service yet for SLH the partnership arrangement gave them an opportunity learn from LCC in terms of service delivery. It would appear however the two organisations shared the same objective, that being to improve service delivery to the customer. When asked about having a “joined up” culture, both managers felt it was important to maintain two distinct identities, however there appeared to be some reservations about a joint culture developing between the two sets of staff. The OSS Head of Service felt that the whole culture of LCC had already changed which could not have any impact on SLH’s culture.

4.3 Analysis – Customer Services Questionnaires

This section illustrates the findings from the CSA questionnaires. The information obtained endeavored to capture if staff felt the partnership has enabled them to provide a more “joined up” service and also tried to capture what evidence there is to suggest a single culture has developed between the two sets of staff.

Question 1 (How long have you worked for your organization?) aimed to establish if there was a similar split of staff from both organizations who had worked for their own

organization for similar lengths of time. It is to be expected that a percentage of staff from LCC will have worked for the council for a longer period due to SLH being a relatively new company. It is interesting to see that over 44% of OSS staff had been employed by LCC for more than ten years, however at SLH there was a 33.3% split of staff who have worked for the company from between 1 to 7 years. This may indicate a higher turnover of staff in SLH.

The second question (How long have you been working in the Speke OSS?) was asked in order to identify if there were any differences in response to supporting questions related to the length of time staff had worked in the partnership arrangement from both organizations. The analysis of data showed no correlation between the length of service working in the shop and the type of response given to the other questions in the survey. **See tables 7 and 8 overleaf.**

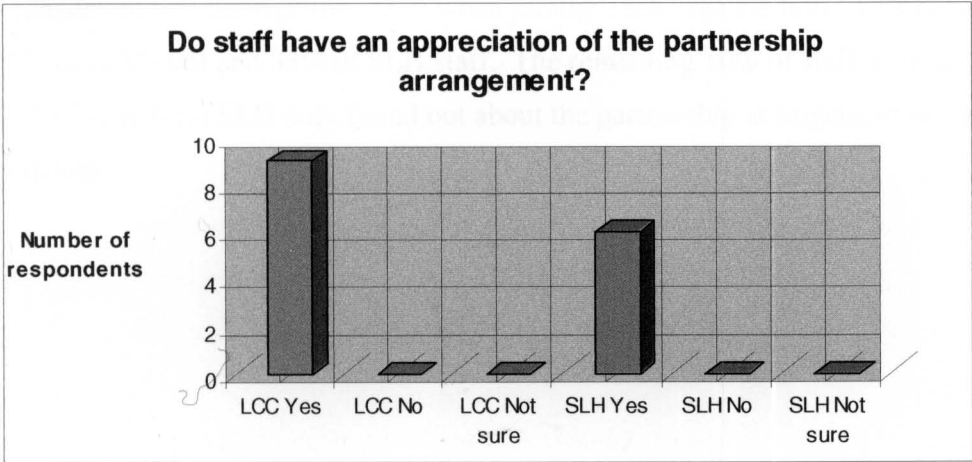
Length of service in Speke OSS	Has an appreciation of what the Speke OSS and SLH partnership arrangement is		Feels the partnership arrangement has enabled greater joined up services		A single culture has developed between the two sets of staff		
	YES	NO	YES	NO	Positive	Neutral	Negative
> 2 months							
2 to 6 mth	1		1				1
6 to 12 mth	3		3		1	1	1
12 to 18 mth	1		1				1
18 to 24 mth							
24 + mth	4		3	3	2		

Table 7: Sample showing no correlation between time employed in the One Stop Shop for LCC staff and response.

Length of service in Speke OSS	Has an appreciation of what the Speke OSS and SLH partnership arrangement is		Feels the partnership arrangement has enabled greater joined up services		A single culture has developed between the two sets of staff		
	YES	NO	YES	NO	Positive	Neutral	Negative
> 2 months	1		1		1		
2 to 6 mth							
6 to 12 mth							
12 to 18 mth	2		2		1		
18 to 24 mth	1		1		1	1	
24 + mth	2		2		1	1	

Table 8: Sample showing no correlation between time employed in the One Stop Shop for SLH staff and response.

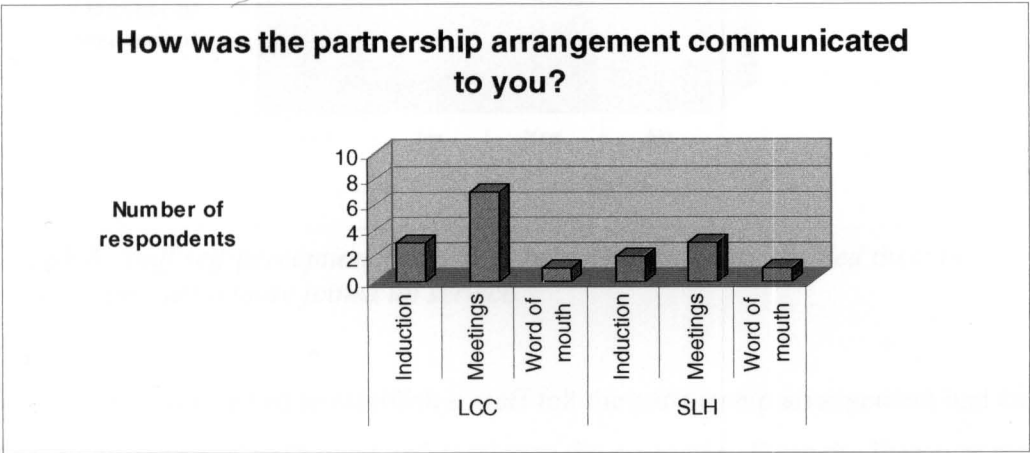
Question 3



Graph 1: Staff appreciation and understanding of the partnership arrangement

This question aimed to establish if staff from both organizations had an appreciation and an understanding of the partnership arrangement in order to answer the research question. 100% of staff from both organizations responded positively.

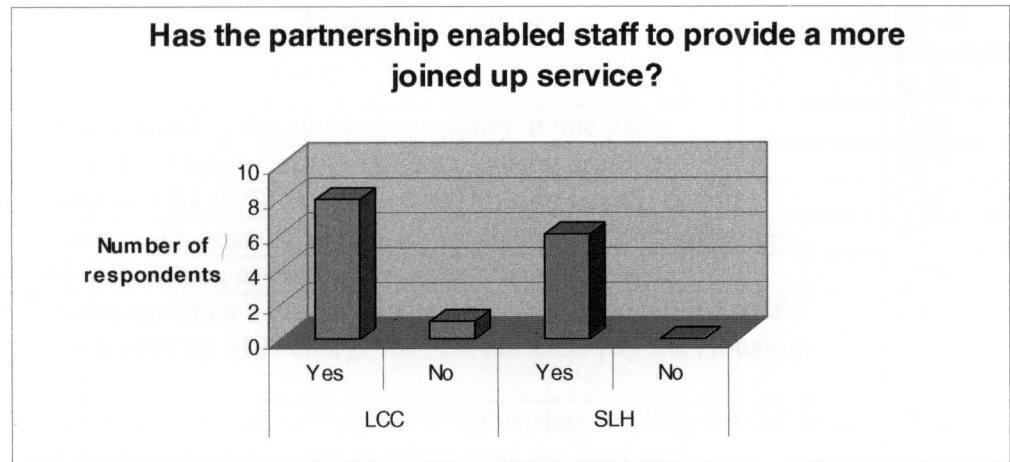
Question 4



Graph 2: *Method used to communicate the partnership arrangement*

It is interesting to see that most staff where informed about the partnership arrangement through standard team meetings. This equated to 63% of LCC staff and 50% of SLH staff. For both sets of staff the next highest method used to communicate the partnership arrangement was through induction when joining each organization. This equated to 27% of LCC staff and 33% of SLH staff. The remaining 10% of staff from LCC and 17% of staff from SLH only found out about the partnership arrangement through word of mouth.

Question 5



Graph 3: *Staff self-perception if they feel the partnership has enabled them to provide a more joined up service.*

This question was asked to establish if staff felt the partnership arrangement had enabled them to provide a more “joined up” service to the customer. From the literature review Bryans (1999) argues that it is people who maintain and sustain partnerships therefore individuals must feel a benefit to themselves as well as to the organization. From the analysis 90% of LCC staff and 100% of SLH staff felt that they had been able to offer a more “joined up” service through the partnership arrangement.

Question 5A

If staff responded YES to question 5 they were asked to describe how the partnership arrangement has enabled them to provide a more “joined up” seamless service. Most responses contained multi comments such as “more convenient for the customer to come into one place and have all their enquiries dealt with” and “SLH staff can only deal with housing enquiries, however if the customer has a council enquiry, regardless of what it is, we can send them across to see an LCC member of staff”. **Table 9** overleaf details the main components of the responses from both sets of staff.

Comment Category	% of respondents SLH	% of respondents LCC
Dealing with all of the customers enquiry at one place	12%	17%
Sharing information through the data sharing protocol	26%	20%
Liaising with LCC /SLH over a rent/Housing benefit enquiry	17%	16%
Informing each other of any customer changes in circumstances	9%	7%
Being able to look at each others computer systems	15%	10%
Gives the customer a clearer picture of how the Housing Benefit service works, eg SLH charge the rent but LCC pay the Housing benefit	1%	0%
Queries are dealt with straight away rather than sending the customer away to get the information required from the land lord	20%	20%

Table 9: *Percentage of staff comments outlining reasons for the partnership enabling a joined up service*

Staff from both organizations rated similar comment categories as being reasons for enabling a more “joined up”, seamless service to the customer.

Question 5B

If staff responded NO to question 5, again they were asked to describe why the partnership arrangement has not enabled them to provide a more joined up, seamless service. **Table 10** below details the 10% response rate from LCC staff only.

Comment Category	% of respondents SLH	% of respondents LCC
Do not consider the partnership arrangement to work for SLH		5%
Although we share the same counter area we are not fully integrated		5%

Table 10:*Percentage of staff comments outlining reasons for the partnership not enabling a joined up service*

It is interesting to find that 10% of LCC staff shared a negative response to this question with one respondent actually stating they did not feel the partnership arrangement was working for SLH, however did not comment on if they felt it was working for LCC staff.

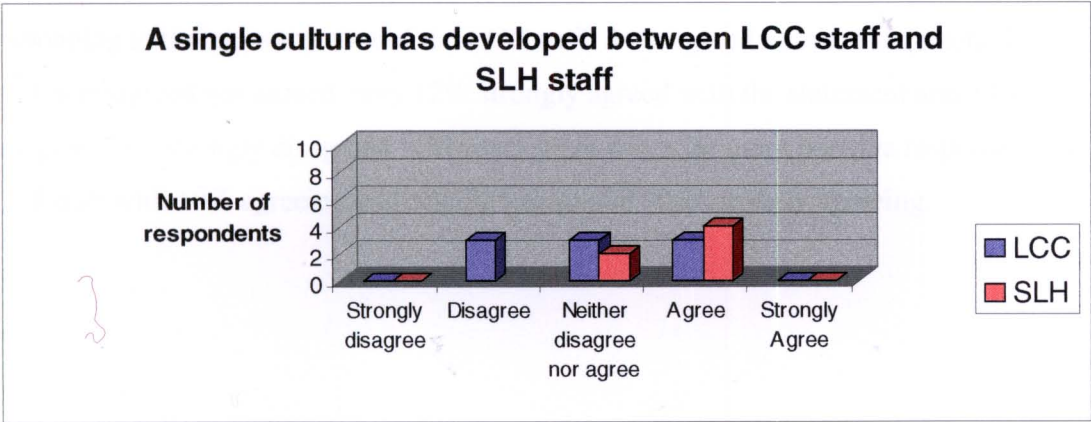
Quote

“ I consider SLH to be one of our main customers yet the partnership does not work for them, if for example they owe Council Tax on an empty property, it appears we are not allowed to treat them the same as any other customer who visits the OSS in respect of Council Tax.”

Question 6

A Likert scale was used to identify staff responses to a series of positive and negative statements. A scoring mechanism was used where 5 = strongly disagree, 4 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 2 = agree and 1 = strongly agree. For each of the seven statements a graph has been presented to show respondents answers. From the answers, a scoring mechanism as described by Fisher (2004) was used, where a rating of 1 to 5 was given for each respondent’s answers. An individual score has been calculated for each respondent from both organizations and an overall mean average has been calculated. This is represented in **Table 11** page ??.

Statement 6.1

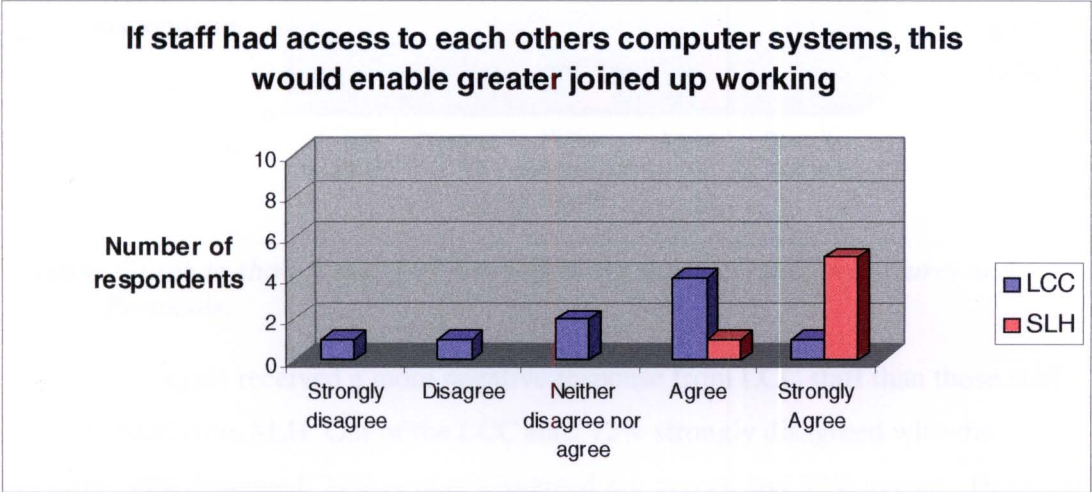


Graph 4: Do staff feel a single culture has developed between both sets of staff

The graph above was asked in order to try and ascertain if staff from both organizations felt that a single culture had developed in the partnership. Out of the LCC staff who

responded there was an equal 33.3% split between the categories, 'Disagree', 'Neither disagree nor agree' and 'Agree'. From the SLH staff who responded 66% agreed with the statement and 34% neither disagreed nor agreed.

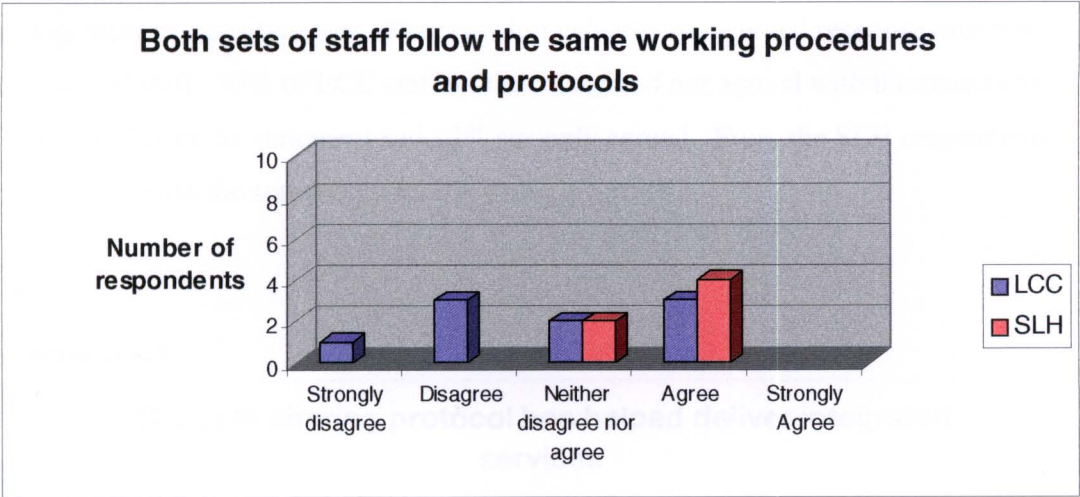
Statement 6.2



Graph 5: Graph to show if staff feel if access to each organizations computer systems would enable greater joined up working.

It would appear there is a difference in opinion between the two sets of staff when responding to this question. Out of the LCC staff 44% agreed with the statement, 22% neither disagreed nor agreed, only 12% strongly agreed with the statement and 11% disagreed and strongly disagreed. However there was a far more positive response from SLH staff with 10% agreeing with the statement and 90% strongly agreeing.

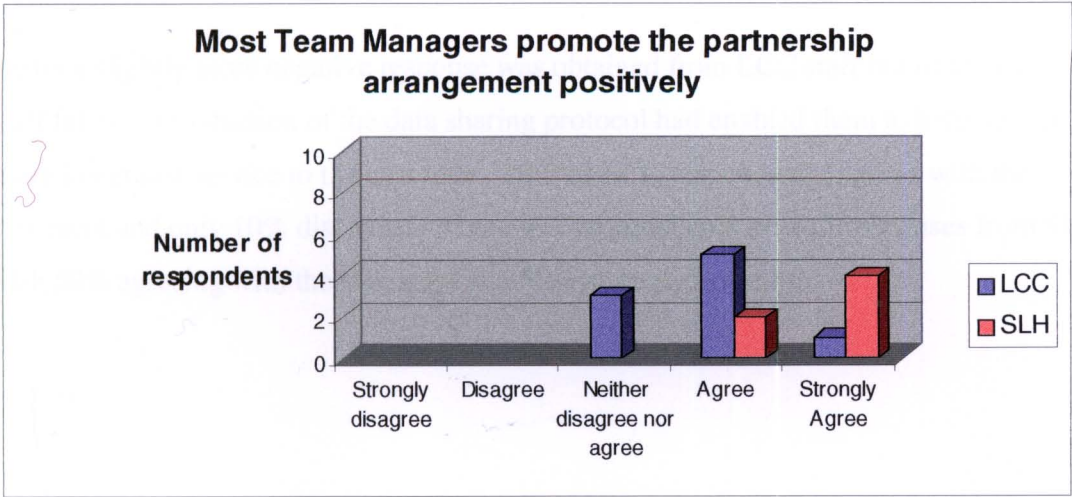
Statement 6.3



Graph 6: Graph to show if staff feel they follow the same working procedures and Protocols.

This question again received a more negative response from LCC staff than those staff who responded from SLH. Out of the LCC staff 12% strongly disagreed with the statement, 33% disagreed, 22% neither disagreed nor agreed and 33% agreed. However there was a far more positive response from SLH staff with 34% agreeing with the statement and 66% strongly agreeing.

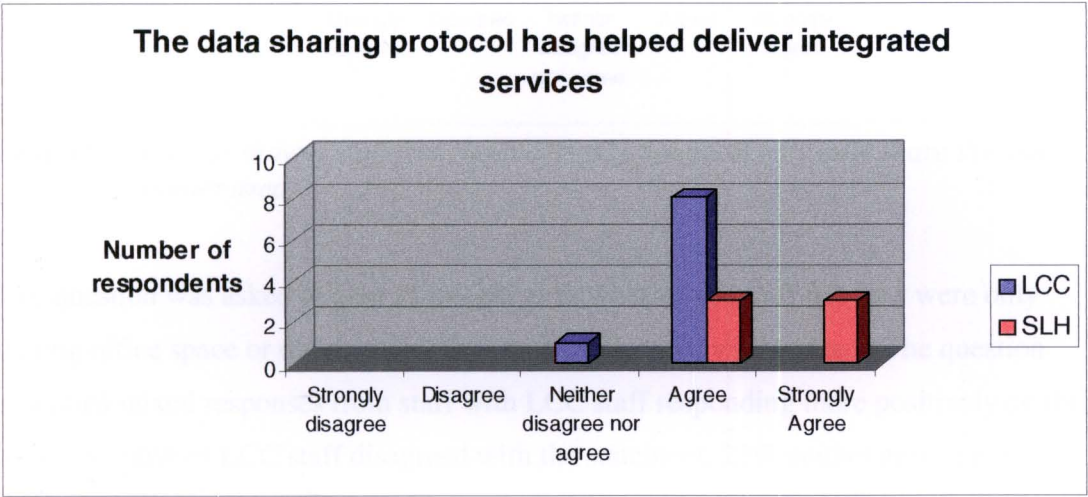
Statement 6.4



Graph 7: Graph to show if staff feel Team Managers promote the partnership arrangement positively.

This question was asked in order to establish if the Team Managers sold the partnership arrangement in a positive way. The question gained a more equal response rate from both sets of staff. 33% of LCC staff neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 55% agreed with the statement and 12% strongly agreed. From the SLH respondents 66% agreed with the statement and 3% strongly agreed.

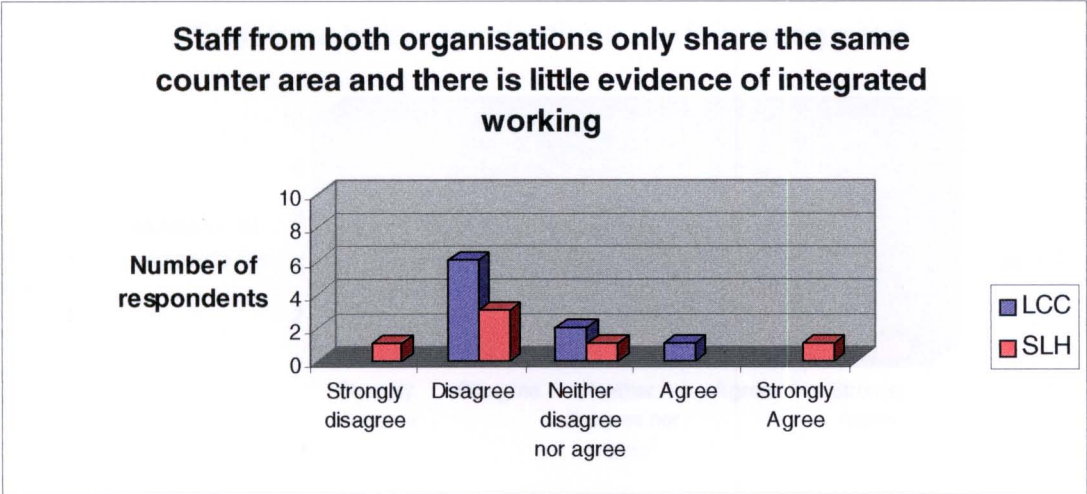
Statement 6.5



Graph 8: Graph to show if staff felt that the Data Sharing protocol helps deliver integrated services

Again a slightly more negative response was obtained from LCC staff but in the main staff felt the introduction of the data sharing protocol had enabled them to help deliver a more integrated service to the customer. 90% of LCC respondent’s agreed with the statement and only 10% disagreed. There was an equal split of staff responses from SLH with 50% agreeing with the statement and 50% strongly agreeing.

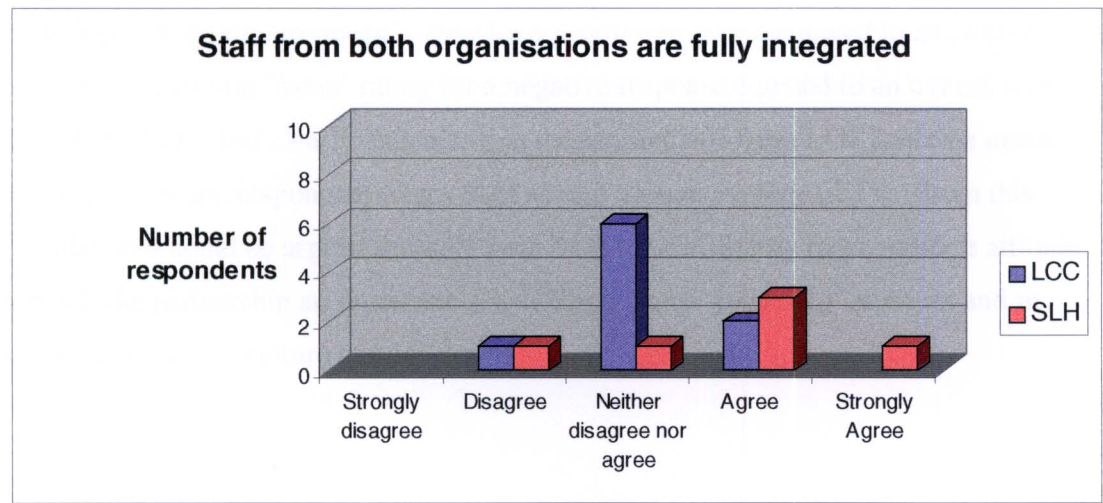
Statement 6.6



Graph 9: Graph to show if staff from both organizations feel they only share the same counter area

This question was asked to gain an insight as to whether the staff felt they were only sharing office space or did they feel their two services truly integrated. The question generated mixed responses from staff with LCC staff responding more positively on this occasion. 66% of LCC staff disagreed with the statement, 22% neither agreed nor disagreed and only 12% agreed with the statement. 50% of SLH staff neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, and there was an equal split of 16.6% of staff who either strongly disagreed, strongly agreed or neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement.

Statement 6.7



Graph 10: Graph to show if staff from both organizations feel they are fully integrated

Again this question generated a mixed response. The question was asked in order to identify if staff felt they are fully integrated. The mixed response is not surprising as staff have already indicated there are factors which stop the two services from fully integrating and have also identified areas which have helped them integrate. It is interesting though to see that a similar percentage of staff from both organizations disagree with the statement (12% and 16.6%) yet 16.6 % of staff from SLH strongly agree with the statement. This could indicate that SLH staff gain more benefit from the partnership arrangement than LCC staff and therefore feel they are indeed fully integrated.

As previously mentioned for each respondents answers a rating of 1 to 5 was given, were 1 was chosen to indicate a positive attitude. Therefore if a respondent ticked ‘strongly agree’ they would score 1 point. This calculation was then reversed when scoring a negative statement. Due to the statements all relating to the same subject it has been possible to use the scoring mechanism to measure the overall opinion of each respondent (Fisher 2004). Once all the statements had been scored it was possible to calculate each respondents overall score as a mean average. From this calculation the researcher could establish if a respondent had a negative or positive attitude towards the subject area.

From each respondents score an overall ‘mean’ score for each organization has been calculated. A maximum ‘mean’ rating for a positive response equated to an overall score of 1 and a maximum ‘mean’ rating for a negative response equated to an overall score of 5. **Table 11** overleaf clearly indicates that the respondents from LCC scored a mean average of 1.9 and respondents from SLH scored a mean average of 2.6. From this calculation it could be argued the staff from SLH have a slightly more positive attitude towards the partnership arrangement in enabling greater “joined up” services and in suggesting a single culture has developed.

Liverpool City Council respondents	Individual score	Overall score as a mean average	Liverpool City Council's overall mean score
Respondent 1	18	2.5	2.6
Respondent 2	13	1.8	
Respondent 3	23	3.2	
Respondent 4	21	3	
Respondent 5	14	2	
Respondent 6	23	3.2	
Respondent 7	16	2.2	
Respondent 8	17	2.4	
Respondent 9	24	3.4	
South Liverpool Housing respondents	Individual score	Overall score as a mean average	South Liverpool Housings overall mean score
Respondent 1	14	2	1.9
Respondent 2	10	1.4	
Respondent 3	13	1.8	
Respondent 4	15	2.1	
Respondent 5	16	2.2	
Respondent 6	14	2	

Table 11: Likert Scale Analysis

When answering the statements in questions 6. 3 and 6.6 staff were asked to comment why they strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement in 6.3 (“Both sets of staff follow the same working procedures and protocols”) or strongly agree or agree with the statement in 6.6 (“Staff from both organizations only share the same counter area and there is little evidence of integrated working”). Interestingly only one respondent from SLH answered these two statements however chose not to add any further comments. Out of the LCC staff who responded, four members of staff responded negatively to statement 6.3 and did make further comments however one responded didn’t respond negatively to statement 6.3 or positively to statement 6.9, however still chose to make additional comments on the questionnaire. The comments are identified in **Table 12** over leaf.

Question 7 and 8

	Additional Comments
Negative response to statement 6.3 (Both sets of staff follow the same working procedures and protocols)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I don't feel SLH take on board the partnership protocols• When SLH verify Housing Benefit forms I don't think they encourage the customer to let LCC know they need to register for Council Tax as a follow up to claiming Housing Benefit.• Even though we have an agreement to share information, we are two completely different organizations with different working practices• SLH have their own protocols which they follow. SLH managers are not as strict as LCC managers regarding uniforms and having drinks at the counter.• I am not sure if SLH staff are aware of the 14-day promise. I have come across completed Benefit applications in their post which should have been fast tracked.
Positive response to statement 6.6 (Staff from both organizations only share the same counter area and there is little evidence of integrated working)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At times staff only take on board their own organizations procedures

Table 12: Additional Comments from Respondents

On investigation it would appear the comments made by LCC staff could indicate they feel SLH staff and managers may not be as committed to providing a “joined up” service as LCC staff.

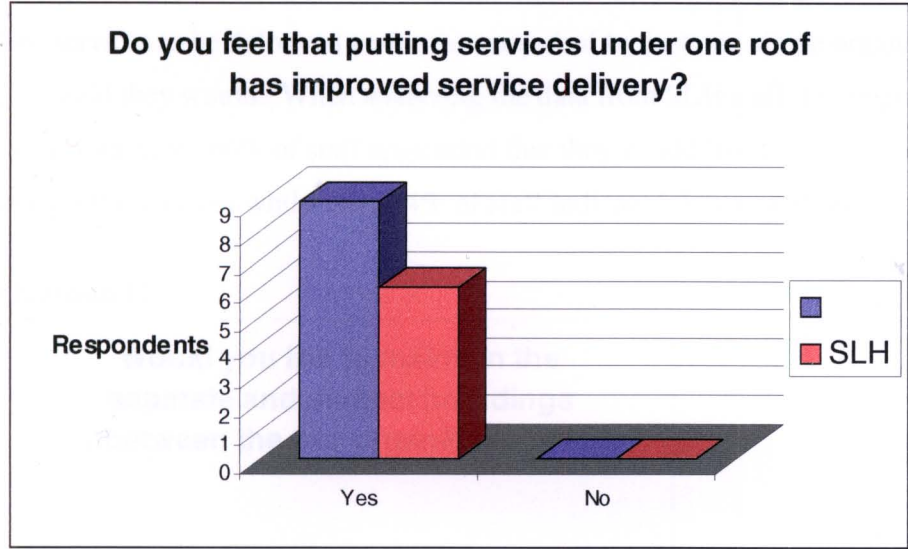
Question 9, 10 and 11 warranted a YES or NO response. The responses are illustrated in **Table 13** below.

Question	LCC response		SLH response	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
9. Do you feel that putting services under one roof has improved service delivery?	9	0	6	0
10. Would you like to see LCC and SLH services being delivered under the same roof by a single public organization?	2	7	4	2
11. Would you like to maintain the separate and distinct brandings between the two organizations?	8	1	3	3

Table 13: Responses from questions 9,10 and 11

The questions have been further illustrated in graphs 12,13 and 14.

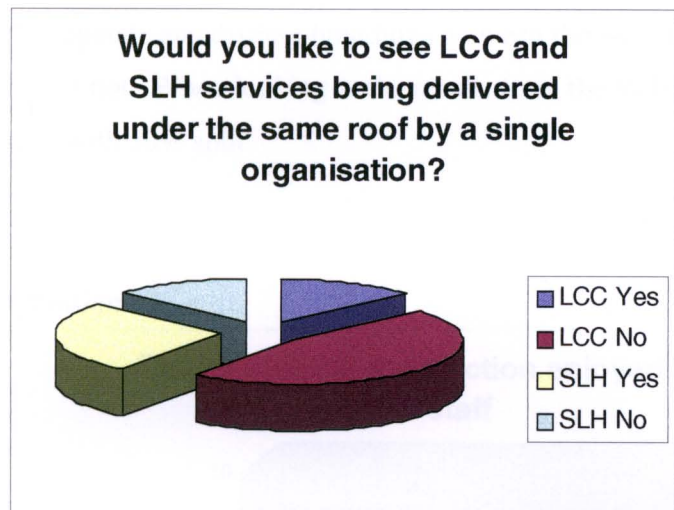
Question 9



Graph 11: A graph to illustrate if staff feel if service delivery has improved due to services being under one roof

As the graph clearly illustrates all staff who responded, from both organizations felt service delivery to the customer had improved due to services being housed under one roof.

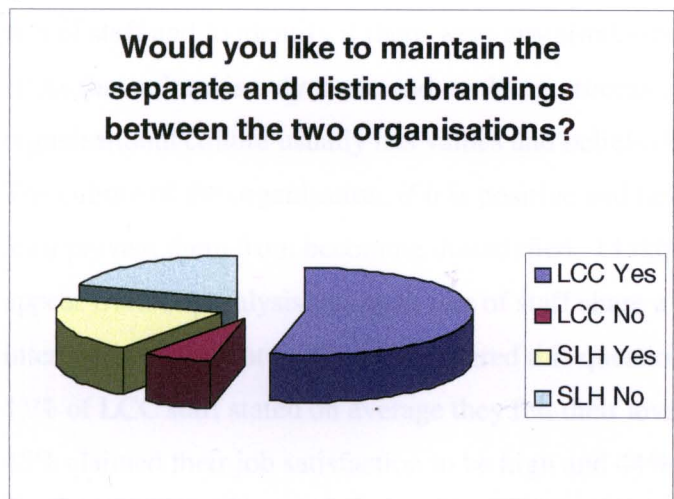
Question 10



Graph 12: A graph representing staff opinion when asked if they would like to see LCC And SLH services being delivered by a single organization

It is clear from the analysis that the majority of staff employed by LCC (78 %) would not like services to be delivered under the same roof by just one single organization and only 22% said they would. When analyzing the data from SLH staff, the opposite opinion was more dominant. 66% of staff responded that they would like to see one organization deliver the services whilst only 34% of staff indicated they would not.

Question 11



Graph 13: A graph to show if staff would like to maintain their own brandings

The analysis shows that 90% of LCC respondents indicated they would like to maintain the separate and distinct brandings between the two organizations and only 10% said they would not. When looking at the results from the SLH respondents, there was an equal split with 50% split.

Question 12



Graph 14: *Level of job satisfaction enjoyed by Liverpool City Council staff*

Question 12 was asked to ascertain the level of job satisfaction staff enjoyed from both sets of staff and to identify if there were any similarities. Both Morgan(1986) and Schein stress that culture is a dynamic and evolving process and literature suggests that the organisational culture usually has values and beliefs that support the organisational goals. The culture of the organisation, if it is positive and helpful can help to motivate staff or at least prevent them from becoming dissatisfied. Linking the research to theory it would appear from the analysis that both sets of staff share a positive and helpful culture. It is interesting to see that LCC staff answered this question more positively than SLH staff. 11% of LCC staff stated on average they felt their level of job satisfaction was very high, 45% claimed their job satisfaction to be high and 44% of staff stated they had some level of job satisfaction. When analysing the data from SLH respondents which can be seen in graph 15, none of the staff claimed to have a very high level of job satisfaction, 84%

stated they had some level of job satisfaction and only 16% stated that on average their level of job satisfaction was high. .

Question 12



Graph 15: Level of job satisfaction enjoyed by South Liverpool Housing staff

Question 13

What do you feel could be improved in order to give a greater level of integrated service to the customer?

Both sets of staff were asked to make comment on the areas they felt could be improved upon in order to provide a greater level of integration and a more seamless service to the customer. This question generated numerous comments, with an equal percentage of staff from both organizations responding (67%). The comments have been extracted and are detailed in **Table 14** overleaf.

Comments from LCC staff	Comments from SLH staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having joint team meetings with SLH staff to share information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to access the same computer systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel the One Stop Shops have gone far enough in relation to Housing benefit matters – no greater level of integration is necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be honest I am not sure we could integrate both services anymore than they already are as we are separate organizations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLH’s managers do not create a happy atmosphere which I feel does not encourage a merge with two companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we worked with the same rent system as LCC as their system is much easier to understand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel SLH’s senior managers are not committed to the partnership for the benefit of the customer. They do not embrace some of our initiatives (14 day promise) which could improve service delivery to the customer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We could work more closely over SLH’s Council Tax liability. We get charged when the tenant should be due to LCC not updating their computer systems. Sometimes we are charged costs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to each others computer systems to enable us to check on rent increases etc. 	

Table 14: *Staff comments from question 13*

Question 14

What do you feel are the main benefits that the partnership arrangement between Liverpool City Council and South Liverpool Housing brings to the organization which employs you?

Both sets of staff where asked to comment on what they felt were the main benefits the partnership arrangement had brought to the organization which employed them. Again this question generated interesting comments. 100% of LCC staff chose to make a comment however only 67% of SLH staff responded. Comments from staff are illustrated in **Table 15** overleaf. Staff have made similar comments and have both mentioned the benefits of the data sharing protocol. It would appear that staff like the physical layout of the office and enjoy being able to walk over to each other to ask for advise. From the comments it is apparent that staff share the same customer focus and have a customer centric approach.

Comments from LCC staff	Comments from SLH staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sharing of information. We can walk over and approach staff from SLH if we have a rent query. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working close together has allowed us to give an excellent customer service and meet customers expectations and demands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with each other to enable the customer's benefit to be processed quicker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The customer no longer has to relay information twice as LCC and SLH staff now sit next to each other, we can both deal with the same enquiry and help each other.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partnership has improved "first point of contact resolution" ie a customer does not need to visit us twice because we liaise with each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoother customer service and a seamless service under one roof
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main benefits are to the customer because they can have all their enquiries dealt with under one roof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sharing of information now that the data sharing protocol is in place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased staff satisfaction as we know we can resolve a customer's query on the first visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in the same office has helped SLH staff understand more about the other services that LCC provide and has meant a greater level of customer service has been given
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives the impression to the customer of a more "customer friendly" service which resolves queries promptly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I feel that SLH gain more from the partnership as we can benefit from all the services provided by the council, ie pest control and environmental services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The data sharing protocol has enabled us to get around data protection rules so we can now look at each others computer systems. The customer no longer needs to travel around to have their enquiry dealt with 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think that because the staff all get on well together we have been able to help SLH staff complete benefit application forms which has improved the quality of work being sent to the back office for processing. 	

Table 15: *Staff comments from question 14*

Question 15: *If you were asked what “real” benefits come to the customer from the partnership – what would they be?*

The final question again asked staff to make their own comments. Again this question generated many interesting comments that can be seen in **Table 16**.

Comments from LCC staff	Comments from SLH staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sometimes something will need to be explained to the customer, which they will need to relay to SLH. If the customer does not fully understand then we can just walk over to SLH staff and explain the situation rather than the customer trying to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff can just walk across to each other to solve the customers enquiry rather than the customer having to visit two separate offices
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The queries can be dealt with there and then. The customer can sort out their rent arrears and any Housing Benefit which may be owed all at the same time. This sometimes makes sure the customer does not receive a rent reminder when benefit is due on their rent account.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I feel the partnership has given a more professional service to the customer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">I think the main benefit is being housed close together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The partnership saves the customer time by having the services all under one roof
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The customers issues/queries can be dealt with under one roof in one visit	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Customer enquiries can be dealt with more quickly	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Working together as one team to put the customer first	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The customer has a better understanding of what each organization does in order to help with their enquiry	

Table 16: *Staff comments from question 15*

When analysing the data from the Customer Service Advisors questionnaires, question 1 identified 44% of LCC staff working in the partnership arrangement had worked for LCC longer than all staff currently working for SLH. There was no correlation between length of service working in the partnership and the type of response given to the other questions in the survey. This data can be seen in **Tables 7 and 8**, page 61-62.

All staff responded that they had an appreciation of the partnership arrangement (question 3) with most staff being advised during team meetings (63% of LCC staff and 50% of SLH staff). For both sets of staff the next highest method of communicating the partnership arrangement was through induction (27% of LCC staff and 33% of SLH staff). This still equated to 10% of LCC staff and 17% of SLH staff having the partnership arrangement communicated to them only via word of mouth.

When staff were asked if the partnership had enabled them to provide a more “joined up” service (question 5), 90% of LCC staff and 100% of SLH staff responded positively. On drilling down further in order to investigate the reasons, numerous comments were given. These can be seen in **Table 9** page 65. For the remaining 10% of LCC staff who did not feel they were able to give a more “joined up” service, they too were asked to comment why. These comments can be seen in **Table 10** page 65.

In question 6 a Likert scale was used in order to capture staff responses to a series of positive and negative statements. When asked if staff felt if a single culture had developed (statement 6.1) between the two organisations, it would appear that a large percentage of staff from SLH agreed with this statement (66%) compared to only 33% of LCC staff. In statement 6.2 staff were then asked if they had access to each others computer systems would this enable greater joined up working. 90% of SLH staff strongly agreed with this statement whilst only 44% of LCC staff agreed.

Statement 6.3 asked if both sets of staff followed the same working procedures and protocols. LCC staff responded more negatively to this question with 0% of staff

agreeing with the statement compared to 66% of SLH staff, who strongly agreed with the statement. Statement 6.4 asked if most of the team managers promoted the partnership arrangement positively. This statement gained an equal response rate from both sets of staff with 55% of LCC staff and 66% of SLH staff agreeing with the statement.

Statement 6.5 asked if the data sharing protocol has helped deliver integrated services. 90% of LCC staff agreed whilst 100% of SLH staff either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Statement 6.6 was a negative statement asking if staff felt as though they only shared the same counter area with little evidence of “joined up” working. This question generated a mixed response with LCC staff answering slightly more positively than SLH staff. 66% of LCC disagreed with the statement whilst 50% of SLH staff neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement. The final statement in question 6, staff were asked to give a rating to was, “staff from both organisations are fully integrated” (statement 6.7). The statement again received a mixed response. This could be expected as staff have previously indicated there are factors which stop the two services from fully integrating, ie. the lack of access to each other computer systems, and identified areas which help them to integrate, ie. the data sharing protocol. 50% of staff from SLH agreed with this statement yet the majority of staff from LCC (67 %) neither disagreed nor agreed. Only 22% of LCC said they agreed with the statement.

As previously discussed, the analysis of the individual score and organisational score, following the responses from the statements contained in the Likert Scale, can be seen in **Table 11** page 73. If staff gave a negative response to statement 6.3 and a positive response to statement 6.6, they were asked to make further comments outlining their reasons. (question 7 and 8). This generated numerous comments which can be seen in **Table 12** page 75. The main themes which came out of this question appeared to be around the lack of commitment towards the partnership arrangement from SLH managers.

Question 9 (do you feel that putting services under one roof has improved service delivery?) generated positive responses from both organisations with all staff responding YES to this question. Question 10 and 11 were asked in order to establish how staff felt about services being delivered under one roof, by just one organisation and maintaining separate identities. The majority of staff from LCC responded negatively to this comment (78%), however 66% of SLH staff responded positively. This forms a correlation between the responses for question 11. As can be expected 90% of LCC staff stated they would like to maintain their own identity with only 50% of staff from SLH agreeing.

Question 12 was asked in order to ascertain if staff shared a positive and helpful culture which could perhaps be measured through the level of job satisfaction they enjoyed. The analysis showed that LCC staff generally had a higher level of job satisfaction than that of their colleagues working for SLH.

Question 13 asked staff to comment on the issues they felt could help give a greater level of integrated service to the customer. Again comments were made about the lack of commitment from SLH’s senior managers. Other main themes that staff commented on where, accessing each others computer systems and having joint team meetings. The full analysis can be seen in **Table 14** page 80.

Question 14 asked staff to make comment on what they felt were the main benefits the partnership arrangement brought to their own organisation. The main themes generated were around the sharing of information, working within close proximity to each other and being able to liase with colleagues, being able to provide a first point of contact resolution to the customer, increase job satisfaction and through sharing knowledge an increase in quality of work. This data can be seen in **Table 15** page 81.

The final question (15) again asked staff to make comments, this time on what they felt the “real” benefits of the partnership brought to the customer. This data can be seen in

Table 16 page 82. The main themes were around liaising with their colleagues in order to prevent the customer having to relay complex information, first point of contact resolution, providing a more professional and efficient service and working together as one big team.

4.4 Analysis - Team Manager Focus Group

From the focus group it is interesting to hear both sets of team manager’s views in comparison to the views of the OSS Head of Service and SLH’s Customer Services Manager.

Question 1: Why do you feel SLH/LCC were chosen as partners?

Quote

“From SLH’s point of view it is a company that cant expand beyond housing. It was viewed that if we linked with the City Council then it may give us an opportunity to take on other services that the council provides”.

“Some staff felt that the partnership arrangement was more a partnership of convenience as SLH needed to relocate and were looking for new premises and LCC were looking to open a OSS in the south of the city”.

Quote

“I think it was timing for them (LCC) to move into the office. It was a good opportunity for the city council to have a presence in Speke”.

“For the council it was an opportunity to role out a One Stop Shop in Speke so it made sense to join up as our services cross over in many ways”

Question 2: What do you think the objectives of the partnership arrangements are?

From the responses this question generated it became apparent that both sets of staff have a high focus on customer service and providing a seamless service to the customer. This links into the emphasis placed on having a customer centric approach which was apparent from the semi structured interviews and the findings from the staff questionnaires.

Quote

“To make the service efficient and to offer the customer more options. I think the overall objective then is to really provide a seamless service to the customer”

Question 3: What do you think the long-term objectives are?

When the Team Manager’s were asked about the long-term objectives of the partnership, it became apparent they felt there was a lot more work which could be done. This somewhat contradicted the views of the senior managers and some advisors.

Quote

“I would say that there is a lot we could improve on that doesn’t go on. Even though we have the data sharing protocol I don’t feel we make full use of it. I don’t think anyone has got the time or resource to develop the data sharing protocol”

“There must be lots of things that we don’t know about each other that would help us deliver a fully integrated service”

It was interesting to note however that one LCC team manager did not feel as though SLH senior managers are as committed to the partnership as LCC senior managers. This reinforces some of the comments made by staff who completed the questionnaires which are highlighted in **Table 14** page 80. In response to this below quote, highlighted overleaf, the managers from SLH agreed.

Quote

“I think a lot of that (long term objectives) come down to senior management. I don’t feel managers from SLH are as committed as those from LCC”.

The Team Managers appeared to have a positive attitude towards the partnership arrangement. SLH Team Managers felt the partnership had enabled them to deliver their services more efficiently and quickly.

Quote

“Before we partnered, SLH would have to ring LCC’s call center if a property had an infestation problem. Now we can ask an LCC member of staff to log a job on LCC’s pest control system. I feel that SLH benefits more from the partnership than LCC does”.

Question 4: How do you envisage the future of the partnership in terms of joined up working?

When asked how the Team Managers envisaged the future of the partnership most felt that the link up of Information Technology systems would assist. Some Team Managers felt the partnership focus so far had mainly been around Housing Benefit and Rent enquiries and felt there are other issues which should be concentrated on.

Quote

“Maybe the long term future will be the link up of IT. We could read only access to each other’s systems. This would stop us having to leave our seats”.

“Yes but that’s just benefits. SLH and LCC can offer a lot more than just this, eg repairs and environmental issues. If we became generic we could check each others systems”.

Following this quote the staff also felt that it would not be unrealistic for one organization to “take over” the other through out sourcing. LCC staff felt the council was running more like a business than a local authority and did not think it would be impossible for LCC to provide most of SLH’s functions

Quote

“We already do out of hours calls for CDS Housing so there is no reason why LCC can’t do your role”.

Question 5: Do you feel staff from both organizations have a joint culture and share the same objectives?

Staff from both organizations had a strong sense of two separate cultures when asked this question. SLH Team Managers felt that LCC was very structured yet did not feel the same about their own organization. Again a comment was made regarding the lack of commitment towards the partnership from SLH senior managers. Some of SLH’s Team Managers felt there was a lot of internal communication between LCC service areas, however felt their own service area lacked this level of communication through out the departments

Quote

“The counter staff get on really well and communicate well between each other. I feel that LCC staff seem to communicate well between each other and this could be because of the joint venture with British telecom as they are experts in communication. Each department seems to know what each other is doing. In SLH we don’t get to find out what each department is doing”.

Question 6: In relation to future joined up services of IT, do you think that is something for the future or is that being unrealistic?

When staff were asked about the future “joined up” services in terms of IT there was a mutual agreement that access to each others systems would be beneficial and would make them feel more integrated.

Quote

“ Whether is be physiological but I feel if we shared IT we would not only appear to be more integrated but would actually give a more seamless service to the customer”.

Question 7 and 8: Do you think one or other organization benefits the most from the partnership? If so Why?

In response to question 7, it was the general consensus that SLH gained the most from the partnership arrangement.

Quote

“Definitely SLH as we get a lot out of LCC in terms of our benefit claims. Since we have been in partnership our relationship has improved with the back office (LCC Housing Benefits processing office). We now actually talk to each other. It goes to show our relationship with the back office has improved, as we have been chosen to pilot the national Benefits Project.” (Government pilot)

Question 9: What do you think the customer benefits from the partnership?

All Team Mangers felt the partnership arrangement has given the customer more choice and improved services and has actually developed since its inception. It would appear though that this improvement, commitment and development had only reached the customer facing staff.

Quote

“I remember when the shop first opened the customer would sit with an SLH member of staff and then go and sit with an LCC member of staff to have each separate enquiry dealt with. Now it is not like that, we liaise with each other and we do the moving around rather than the customer”.

“Yes I agree it was a bit stand offish in the beginning. It was very defined but with in 4 or 5 months we had built up a good working relation ship with each other, well at least the front line staff had”.

Question 10 and 11: Do you feel the data sharing protocol has helped deliver and joined up service? If so why?

Both sets of staff felt that the data sharing protocol has helped deliver a joined up service as staff seemed unsure of what information they could legally share before it was drawn up.

Question 12: What do you feel would improve the service in terms of joined up working?

When the Team Mangers were asked what they felt would improve the service in terms of “joined up” working they all felt that more joint training, briefings and team meetings would be beneficial. SLH staff also felt it would be useful if they had access to LCC’s intranet site. Staff felt that joint community engagement would help advertise the partnership and stated that both sets of staff needed a full knowledge of all the services provided by each organisation.

Quote

“We need to be doing joint community engagement and really push what we are doing. There is such a big overlap in our services but we don’t advertise this and work together on this. Staff from both organisations need to know what each others service does so we can all feed in effectively. There is definitely a lack of understanding”.

Question 13and 14: Do you think the partnership offers a seamless service or is it just a case of two organizations who has co-located? How do you think a joint culture could be developed further?

When the Team Managers were asked to if they felt the partnership was just a case of two organizations who have relocated and if they felt an joint culture could be developed further, all staff shared the same opinion that the two organizations had just amalgamated.

Quote

“ Yes two organizations just amalgamated. I think we are on the first step to partnership working”.

In order for a joint culture to be developed the main themes to come out of this question were around communication, joint training sessions and meetings and management attitude.

Quote

“Training and some changes to senior management. There is defiantly a lack of understanding of what the OSS does. We need to promote ourselves jointly. I feel some senior managers are barriers”.

Quote

“I feel that SLH are in the same position as LCC where before we developed the Customer Contact Strategy. LCC knew we needed to change, as there was little communication. I think that SLH needs to change and communicate interdepartmentally”.

“Your right we don’t know what each of our departments doing. For example people in our back office didn’t even know we worked a shift pattern. Also SLH departments are very unwilling to help the font line staff”.

“LCC used to be exactly like that before the shops developed”.

Question 15: Do you think other partnerships should be entered into by LCC and registered Social landlords?

The final question was asked to round up the focus group and try to establish if the Team Managers felt the partnership was working, although apparently not perfectly from the analysis. The Team Managers generally felt that other partnerships should be entered into between LCC and other Registered Social Landlords. Blockages such as the lack of integration between IT systems, issues surrounding data protection and a lack of commitment from SLH senior managers where identified as barriers.

Quote

“It hasn’t really developed or progressed though but it has worked. Even at the level we have achieved so far I still feel it has worked”.

I feel that IT and data protection issues can be overcome but I don’t feel as though the commitment from SLH managers is there”.

It is interesting to see that similar themes, which have been identified from the staff questionnaires and semi structured interviews, have also been identified during the focus group. The most prominent of these was again the lack of commitment towards the partnership arrangement that both sets of staff felt from SLH's senior managers. Other themes comprised of the data sharing protocol as the Team Managers felt this had enabled a more "joined up" service to be provided, both sets of staff shared the same objectives in delivering good customer service, all Team Managers felt having access to each others computer systems would further enhance "joined up" working and there was a general consensus that two separate cultures definitely existed between the two organisations. This again reinforced the data collected from the interview with the OSS Head of Service and the staff questionnaires.

4.5 Summary

Within this chapter the various methods of data collection (semi structured interviews, questionnaires and focus group) have been identified. The research design has been described, the data analysed and illustrated in graphical and tabular formats with an explanation of the data provided.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The One-Stop Shop service is relatively new and still expanding. It is seen as being at the forefront of Liverpool’s change agenda epitomising the ‘new’ Liverpool City Council providing efficient and cost effective services. The management team is continually striving to improve the service. Public/private partnership arrangements are common with in the City Council in order to deliver best value services to the citizens of Liverpool, primarily by exploiting the expertise of both the private and public sector. The Speke OSS and SLH partnership arrangement is the first public/public partnership arrangement within the authority and indeed within local authorities across England and Wales. This unique partnership arrangement offered an opportunity to explore the success, from an employee’s viewpoint, in terms of providing a “joined up” seamless service to the customer, and also ascertaining if there was any evidence to suggest a single culture has developed between the two sets of staff.

As discussed in previous chapters, there is limited theory available about the subject area. This research is an original piece of work, which has not been explored previously. The Speke OSS and SLH partnership arrangement has been researched as a case study using primary data which took the form of semi structured interviews, questionnaires and a focus group. From the limited theory available and the analysis of the research, the author has developed a conceptual model called the “CHANGED” model that it is envisaged could be used by the authority when developing future successful public/public partnerships. As a further piece of comparative research, the author looked at a similar partnership arrangement that being the merger between University College Chester and Warrington Collegiate institute to discover if there was any evidence to suggest this merger had enabled staff to provide a seamless service and again looking to see what evidence there was to suggest if a single culture had developed between the two sets of staff. The findings from this mini case study (**appendix 7**) could then be compared to

those of the main research area in order to identify emerging themes. From the analysis of both case study's the author was then in a position to test the validity of the "CHANGED" model to establish if it could be utilized for the development of other public/public partnerships/merges.

5.2 Critical Evaluation of the Adopted Methodology

Through the National One Stop Shop Benchmarking club, and a search of the internet, initial enquiries were made in order to establish if any other public/public partnership arrangement existed, not only across OSS's, but any other service area within authorities. From this investigation it became apparent that LCC was the first authority to embark upon such an arrangement. As there was therefore no direct comparison, it was deemed appropriate to investigate the Speke OSS and SLH partnership arrangement as a case study. If the research were to be repeated, the author may have found it beneficial to embark upon a wider search than just England and Wales. This search may have identified other authorities, perhaps within Europe, who had experience of developing public/public partnerships. This may have given the author a deeper insight into the subject area and a wider sphere to compare data against.

The OSS Head of Service and SLH's Customer Services Manager were both interviewed separately as a starting point to the research. The interviews aimed to establish both managers' viewpoints on:

- The drivers / objectives for the partnership arrangement
- Why LCC/SLH chose each other as partners
- Each organisations long and short term objectives
- How each organisation envisaged the future of the partnership in terms of joined up working

- If each organisation hoped a single culture would develop between the two sets of staff
- Both managers views on the future use of joined up IT in order to help provide a more joined up service

This provided useful background information to the study and from this enabled the author to develop a questionnaire for both sets of staff to complete.

The questionnaire was issued to staff with an explanation given to the purpose of the research. The author had to be aware that staff may have felt intimidated due to the researcher being part of the OSS management team. In order for staff to be truthful, and meaningful data collected from the questionnaires, it was important to clarify to staff that the results from the questionnaires would not be shared with any other person or be used for any other purpose other than that of the dissertation. Assurances were thus given to staff that the information would be confidential. It was perhaps over optimistic to expect all staff to make meaningful comments which could add further insight to the research, and only 75% of respondents chose to make comprehensive comments where necessary.

In hindsight it would have been more beneficial in extracting information from respondents had the questionnaires been designed requesting fewer comments. It became apparent that toward the end of the questionnaire, certain staff were showing signs of “fatigue”. It may have also benefited the author if an e-mail had have been sent to all customer service advisors from both organisations, prior to completing the questionnaire, reiterating and giving an assurance that the data collected would be anonymous. This may have generated an increased number of meaningful and open comments. Of the comments which were generated, it may have also benefited the author to have drilled down further into these responses.

The response to the questionnaire however was extremely positive generating a healthy **75% return rate**. The returned questionnaires were analysed. From the analysis of the

transcribed interviews with the OSS Head of Service and SLH's Customer Services Manager, and the analysis from the staff questionnaires it became apparent that common themes were emerging from staff views around being able to provide a seamless service and whether they felt a single culture had developed. From this analysis questions for the focus group with both OSS and SLH Team Managers were formulated.

The partnership arrangement has been established since October 2002. Since this time there has been a high turn over of SLH Team Managers. The author felt in order to gain meaningful data; it was imperative to the research to ensure were possible all managers attended the focus group who had worked in the partnership arrangement for more than three months, and preferably from its inception. A letter was sent inviting two ex SLH Team Managers to attend the focus group. Although the focus group meeting was tape recorded the author found it difficult to control the group and chair the meeting. If the research were to be undertaken again, it would be beneficial to have an impartial third party facilitating the focus group session. From the initial interviews, the data collected from the questionnaires and the information transcribed from the focus group, the author was in a position to triangulate the findings.

From the emerging themes the analysis uncovered and the limited theory already available, it was possible for the author to develop a conceptual model, which is discussed fully in **Appendix 7**. In order to further test the validity of this model, the researcher engaged the assistance of a second year MBA group and asked members of the group to answer the below questions:

1. In your experience of partnership arrangements within LCC do you think the above model could be applied?
2. Which of the elements of the model do you feel are most important to a successful partnership?
3. Which of the elements of the model do you feel are the least important to a successful partnership?

The findings are discussed in section 5.4.1 of this chapter.

5.3 Conclusions about the Research Question

From the results identified in Chapter Four, some very interesting conclusions can be drawn, relating to the research question:

“A Case Study of Liverpool City Council’s Speke One Stop Shop and South Liverpool Housing Partnership Arrangement - Is it successful from an employee’s viewpoint?”

The following analysis aims to discuss the conclusions, whilst critically evaluate the relative theoretical assumptions and models.

5.3.1 Theoretical Application

Within the OSS service there has been a concerted effort to “add value” to the customer experience which has attempted to be achieved by forming a partnership arrangement with SLH, sharing the same counter area in order to provide the customer with a seamless “joined up” service. The benefits of such a partnership arrangement have been documented in Chapter One section 1.1.3. This piece of research attempted to answer the below research questions:

1. How has the Partnership arrangement managed to enable staff to provide a seamless service to customers?
2. What evidence is there to suggest that a single culture has developed between staff from both organizations.

From the initial interviews it is apparent the driver for the partnership arrangement was to deliver excellent customer service, however LCC felt the OSS's already provided excellent customer services and the partnership arrangement would enable SLH to provide a "better service" for them selves and provide cost savings to the authority at the same time. This links to Ranson et.als argument that one partner can enable the realisation of the others full potential.

Quote from the focus group

"It has helped (the partnership) SLH deliver their services more efficiently, for example before we partnered, SLH would have to ring the contact center if a property had an infestation problem. Now we can ask an LCC member of staff to log a job on LCC's Pest Control system. I feel that SLH benefits more from the partnership than LCC does".

"Yes I agree, we (SLH) definitely get more out of the partnership arrangement"

The themes that emerged from the interviews with both managers and the focus group, (customer centric approach, "joined up service", excellent customer service, single point of access, culture change, communications, liaising) can be linked to the factors outlined by Rounthwaite which underpin the commitments required for improved public partnerships, also reinforcing Bryans (1999) theory.

When the CSA's, who completed the questionnaire, where asked if the partnership arrangement had enabled them to provide a more "joined up" service, 100% of SLH's staff responded "YES" and 90% of LCC's staff agreed. It would appear that staff feel a benefit to themselves as well as to the organization from the partnership arrangement (Bryans 1999). The comments identified in **Table 9** page 65 outline the reasons why, with most staff agreeing that the introduction of the data sharing protocol being the main factor closely followed by being able to deal with customer enquiries straight away

through sharing the same counter area, rather than sending the customer to another location for further information. Of the 10% of LCC staff who responded negatively to this question, the main reason being that although staff share the same counter area, they did not feel fully integrated with SLH staff.

It is interesting to see that when staff were asked if they felt a single culture had developed between LCC and SLH, a far more positive response to this question was generated from the SLH staff with 66% agreeing with the statement. This also mirrors the response from the interviews with the OSS Head of Service and SLH's Customer Services Manager.

Quote from the OSS Head of Service

“Yes I think it was initially the hope that if a customer came into the shop, it didn't really matter whether they would go to SLH or LCC staff, they would get the same level of service. It would be the same sort of culture behind the scenes if you like. But I think that is impractical really because the whole culture of LCC has changed and really that can't have or hasn't had any type of impact on SLH, so really they are always going to be working to their own agenda”.

Quote from SLH's Customer Services Manager

I think the long term objective was instead of seeing us as two separate services was to have more of a “joined up” service where perhaps we could even start to share IT systems where a customer would not have to get up and move from an LCC advisor to an SLH advisor”.

5.3.2 Application of Ongaro's Enabling Factors for Process Management in the Public Sector

Earlier in the literature review (Chapter 2, section 2.2), using the Italian OSS's, Ongaro (2004) suggests a model that relates the “*key enabling factors for the development of process management in the public sector*” at the macro and micro levels, which can be adopted for use with the OSS and SLH partnership, where the macro level consists of the legal and cultural setting (data sharing protocol), and the micro level consists of executive leadership, organizational culture, information and communication technologies. Therefore we can apply and illustrate the research questions in Ongaro's Enabling Factors for process management in the Public Sector model overleaf where the existing model has been applied to the OSS/SLH partnership context.

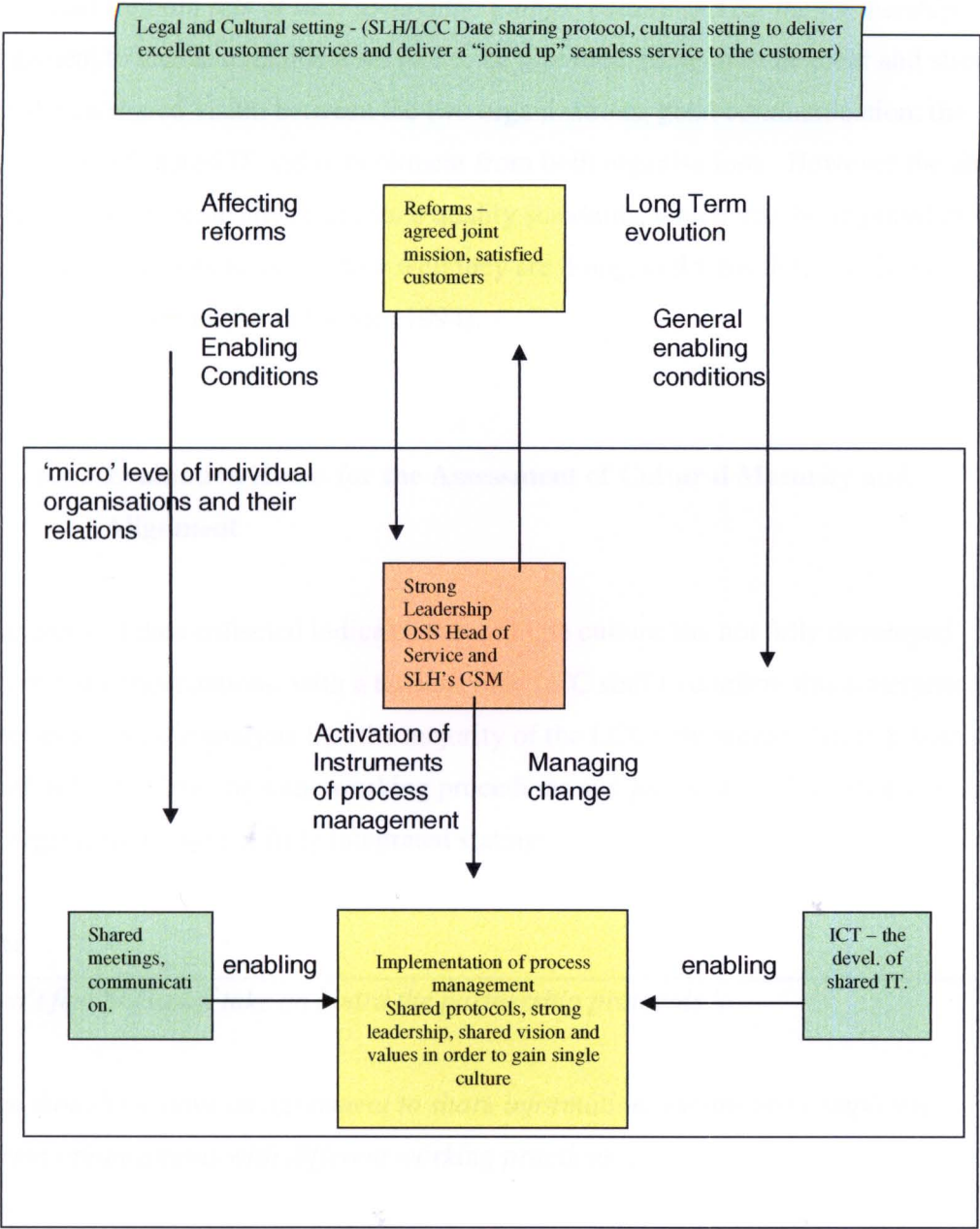


Figure 6: Enabling Factors for Process Management in the Public Sector – Applied to the OSS and SLH partnership Arrangement

Applying this model to the OSS/SLH partnership it can be surmised from the analysis of *the data that for both sets of staff to develop a single culture and for the partnership* arrangement to enable a seamless service to be provided, there must be clear and strong leadership, a shared vision between the two organizations, good communication, the development of shared IT and commitment from both organisations. However the above model does not indicate any established quality standards, which may be required in order for both partners to assess how well they are doing, and what they can do to improve their activities Rounthwaite (1994).

5.3.3 Evaluation Zones for the Assessment of Cultural Maturity and Alignment

The analysis of data collected indicates that a single culture has not fully developed between both organizations, with a tendency for LCC staff to confirm this statement. It can be seen from the analysis that the majority of the LCC respondents felt that both sets of staff did not follow the same working procedures and protocols and felt that staff from both organizations are not fully integrated stating:

Quote

“I don’t feel SLH staff take on board the partnership protocols”.

“Even though we have an agreement to share information, we are two completely different organizations with different working practices”.

“At times staff only take on board their own organizations procedures”.

An appropriate tool to measure the maturity and alignment between the two organizational cultures could be to use Fuller et.als. assessment framework illustrated in **Table 17** overleaf.

Evaluation Zone	Predicted success for the partnership
A	Likely
B	Probable
C	Possible
D	Unlikely

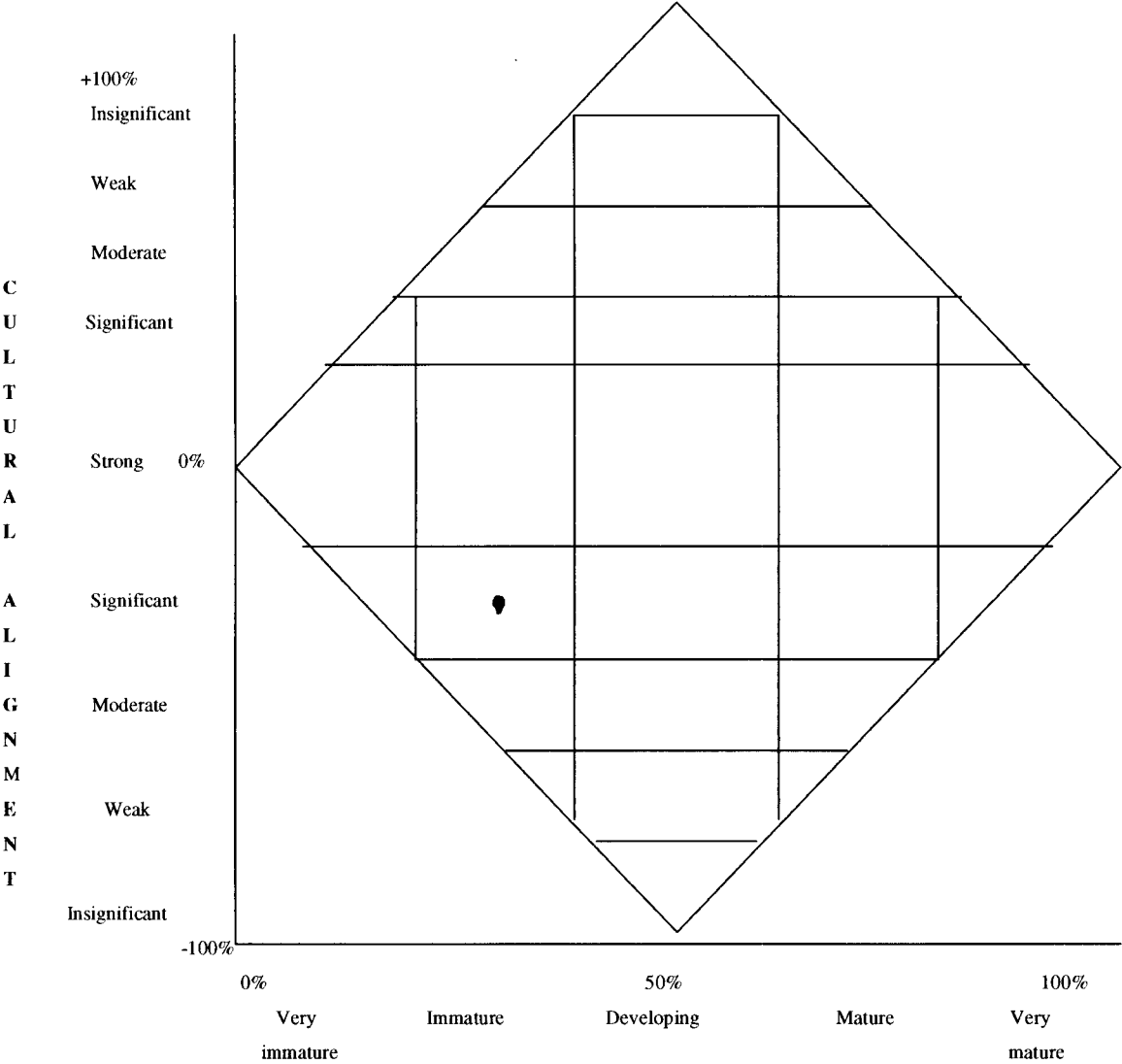


Table 17: Evaluation Zones for the assessment of Cultural Maturity and Alignment – The OSS and SLH Partnership Arrangement

Where (+100%) equals the highest level of cultural alignment and (–100%) equals the lowest level of cultural alignment and (0%) equals the lowest level of cultural maturity and (100%) equals the highest level of cultural maturity. From the analysis of data it can be seen from the representation in **Table 17** that the OSS and SLH partnership has a “weak” (low) cultural alignment and an “immature” (low) cultural maturity. The positioning of the cultural alignment, displayed on the model, between the two organizations has been purely based on the qualitative analysis of the data collected from the interviews conducted with the OSS Head of Service and SLH’s Customer Services Manager, the questionnaires completed by both sets of CSA’s and the focus group held between both organizations Team Managers.

5.3.4 Staff Comments

Staff were asked to comment upon what they felt could be improved in order to give a greater level of integrated service, and a more seamless service to the customer which can be seen in **Table 14** page ?? some of these comments link into factors suggested for a successful partnership outlined by Rounthwaite (1994), Bryans (1999) and Fuller et.al.(2003) such as

- Clear leadership
- Commitment
- Sharing of goals
- Joint culture
- Communication

For example:

Quotes

“Being able to access the same computer systems”

“SLH’s managers do not create a happy atmosphere which I feel does not encourage a merger with two organizations”

“I feel SLH’s senior managers are not committed to the partnership for the benefit of the customer”

If staff responded negatively to Question 6.3 which was “Both sets of staff follow the same working procedures and protocols”, they were asked to comment why. These comments can be seen in full in **Table 11** page73, however it is interesting to see that the staff comments below reinforce the comments made by the OSS Head of Service when interviewed and asked “Was it hoped that the staff from both organizations would have a joined up culture and objectives”.

Staff comments to Question 6.3

“Even though we have an agreement to share information, we are two completely different organizations with different working practices”.

“SLH have their own protocols which they follow. SLH managers are not as strict as LCC managers regarding uniforms and having drinks at the counter”.

OSS Head of Service comment from Interview

“Yes I think that it was initially the hope that if a customer came in to the shop, it didn’t really matter weather they would go to SLH staff or LCC staff, they would get the same level of service. It would be the same sort of culture behind the scenes if you like. But I think that its impractical really because the whole culture of LCC has changed and really that can’t have or hasn’t had any type of impact on SLH, so really they are always going to be working to there own agenda. It’s very difficult to try and influence their culture really”.

5.3.5 Comparison between the OSS and SLH Partnership with The University College Chester and Warrington Collegiate Institute merger in order to test the validity of the “Changed” Model. (see appendix 7)

Morgan and Schein (1996) stress that culture is a dynamic and evolving process and literature suggests that the organizational culture usually has values and beliefs that support the organizational goals. There are some similarities between the two partnerships / merges in that there is little evidence to indicate that a single culture has developed between the two partnerships. From the literature already available around the subject area and research questions, and the analysis of both case studies the author was able to draw out the main factors evident which were missing in ensuring a single culture could develop between two partnering public bodies in order to enable a “joined up” service to be delivered.

From the data collected and analysis of the case study outlined in **Appendix 7**, it is evident that a lack of communication took place. A high percentage of staff from both

campuses responded that they were unsure if the reasons for the merger were explained to them (50% of the Chester staff and 75% of the Warrington staff), stating that

“A discussion of the proposal rather than merely a statement of the event would have encouraged “ownership”. It would have been useful to have a clearer picture of why the merger took place and how it was to operate”.

It became apparent from the analysis of questionnaires that the majority of the Chester based staff surveyed felt the merger had enabled staff to provide a more joined up service to the student, however the reverse response was evident from the Warrington based staff. Staff were asked to comment as to why they had responded negatively to this question which generated some very interesting comments which are detailed in full in **appendix 7**, such as:

“No induction to Chester’s policies/procedures on a day-to-day level”

“ No attempt to integrate staff from the two sites”

“No sharing of best practice”

“No base at Chester for Warrington staff. Issues should have been addressed from the start”

Overall the Warrington based staff responded far more negatively than the Chester based staff in all questions, as to whether they felt a single culture had developed between the two bodies and if they felt a more “joined up” service was being delivered. From the analysis of data collected this could be due to the lack of main factors influencing the success of a healthy partnership such as commitment, development through training, communication and an agreed joint mission, outlined by Rounthwaite (1994), Bryans

(1999) and the VCE Information Technology and management Company.
(www.opax.swin.edu.au)

5.4 Conclusions about the Research Problem

The main aim of the study was to identify if the partnership arrangement between LCC’s OSS and SLH is successful from an employee’s viewpoint in terms of being able to provide a “joined up” seamless service to the customer and developing a single culture between the two organizations. Literature suggests there are many elements that are required to be present for the development and success of a healthy partnership. The author has introduced the “CHANGED” model, which may be adopted for the success of future public/public partnerships which LCC may choose to embark upon. The Model consists of:

- Commitment
- Holistic
- Attitude
- Networking
- Generic
- Engage
- Develop

It can be seen throughout the OSS and SLH case study, the analysis of the findings has identified there appeared to be a lack of **commitment** towards the partnership arrangement from SLH’s senior managers.

Quote

“I feel SLH’s senior managers are not committed to the partnership for the benefit of the customer”

It could therefore perhaps be argued that the lack of commitment had a negative effect on the staff's **attitude** towards the partnership. In terms of networking the author has identified useful information can be obtained from benchmarking clubs. It has been identified within the critique of the research in 5.2 of this chapter that a greater level of **networking** with public bodies outside England and Wales may have benefited the study. It could therefore be argued that this greater level of networking could play an intrinsic role in the success of future public/public partnerships. Staff from both LCC and SLH identified that access to each others computer systems would allow for greater "joined up" working, therefore there would be a requirement for staff to become fully **generic** through training and development in order for staff to be fully **engaged** in the partnership arrangement allowing it to **develop**.

It is apparent that all elements of the "CHANGED" Model can be applied to the OSS and SLH partnership arrangement, however not all elements of the model may sit well for the merger between University Chester College and Warrington Institute Collegiate. Part of this reason being that staff do not share the same counter area and carry out slightly different work due to the differences in student courses.

5.4.1 Conclusions - The questionnaire completed by the MBA focus group

As mentioned earlier in this chapter in section 5.2, research involving a focus group of MBA students took place in order to further test the validity of the "CHANGED" model. The focus group were asked to complete a short questionnaire which can be viewed in **Appendix 8**.

This additional research enabled the author to further triangulate the findings of all the research carried out in this study. From the results obtained it is clear to see that this model, or one of a similar nature, could be adopted to ensure success when entering into a partnership arrangement.

100% of respondents stated that the model could be applied with 10% stating that the “**generic**” element may not always apply due to some partnerships not sharing the same office space. This factor was also apparent from the research carried out between University College Chester and Warrington Collegiate Institute, as staff do not share office space.

When asked to comment on which elements of the model respondents felt were the most important to a successful partnership, this generated a multitude of responses, with **commitment** and **attitude** being the most popular elements.

Quote

“Attitude is by far the most important element of the model. If this element is not present it is highly unlikely that any partnership will be able to become successful”.

“The most important element would have to be commitment as this would have to be evident from top to bottom. The other key element would be attitude and develop and networking”.

I think commitment is most important, with out this non of the other elements can be achieved”.

The third and final question, “which element of the model do you feel are the least important” also generated a mixed response but it was apparent respondents felt that the “generic” element of the model was least important.

Quote

“Generic – I think this could even hamper development if it is at the expense of a more specialist service”

“Generic – it may not be necessary for staff from both partners to be generically skilled. They do however need an understanding of each others business”

“Generic – partnerships should bring individual skills which should be encouraged.”

5.5 Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to the study particularly as the researcher could find no similar comparison of a public/public partnership arrangement within other local authorities and in particular to front line staff. The most appropriate example of another public sector partnership arrangement that the author was able to draw comparisons with and test the validity of the authors own conceptual model, the “CHANGED” model was that of the merger between two HE institutes, those being University Chester College and Warrington Collegiate Institute. The study has been restricted to only take into account success of the OSS and SLH partnership arrangement from an employees view point and not that of a customers. This is due to the time constraint in which this piece of research was required to be completed in.

5.6 Opportunities for Further Research

There are ample opportunities for further research within this area. Firstly the Speke OSS and SLH partnership is the first of its kind and unique in that sense. Currently there

would not appear to be the opportunity to carry out any comparative data analysis with a true public sector public/public partnership. There could be an opportunity in the future to implement the “CHANGED” model to any proposed public/public partnerships within LCC and further test the validity of this model. The model has only been applied to the merger between University Chester College and Warrington Collegiate institute. Evidence suggested that not every element of the model could be applied to this merger.

If LCC embarked upon another public/public partnership arrangement not only could the “CHANGED” model be applied to help ensure “buy in” and commitment from both organizations, but there may be an opportunity for a positivist approach to be taken for any further research. This may help generalize the findings.

In section 5.5, the author has outlined the study has only looked at success of the partnership from an employee’s viewpoint due to time constraints. There is an opportunity here to carry out a further piece of research, which captures the viewpoint of the customers who utilize the Speke OSS. Additional research could also investigate the psychological aspect of the partnership in relation to the perception of the success of the partnership from both an employee and customer’s viewpoint. Quality Assurance measures are not currently in place between the two organizations, therefore no benchmark or measures have been set in terms of providing excellent customer services through a “joined up” approach.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study is one of a theoretical nature and therefore probably does not warrant an implementation plan. As discussed in section 5.4 of the study – Conclusions about the Research Problem, the research has highlighted there is little evidence to suggest a single culture has developed between the Speke OSS and SLH customer service advisors. There is however evidence to suggest that a more seamless “joined up” service has been provided to the customer. From the interviews carried out with the OSS Head of Service and SLH’s Customer Services Manager (**appendices 1 and 2**) it is apparent that the objectives for the partnership arrangement were to provide excellent customer service, reduce running costs and provide a seamless service to the customer. It would appear that certain objectives have materialized however analysis of the questionnaires would indicate that some staff feel the two organizations are not fully integrated and suggest that both organizations have merely relocated and share the same office space. Comments made by staff indicate there may be evidence of a lack of commitment from SLH’s managers towards the partnership (**Table 13**), which could be having a negative effect on staff attitudes.

When analyzing the questionnaires from University Chester College and Warrington Collegiate Institute (**appendix 7**) discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3.5, it would appear that as with the OSS and SLH partnership arrangement, a single culture has not developed between the two sets of staff. Staff commented on the lack of communication prior to the merger, which may have affected how engaged staff became with the eventual established merger.

From the conclusions which have been drawn from both sets of data and the research carried out with the MBA focus group, the author would recommend the application of the “CHANGED” model, or similar models, prior to LCC entering into any future

public/public partnerships. It can be said, that in both scenarios discussed within this study, if a formal communication strategy had been in place prior to the partnership agreement, then managers may have shown more commitment to the arrangement which in turn may have had a positive effect on staff attitudes and ensured all concerned were engaged with the process from the partnerships fruition.

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Appendix 1 – Transcribed Interview with The One Stop Shop Head of Service

Interview with HOS 01/10/04

Title of Dissertation: Housing and One Stop Shop Partnerships: are they successful from an employee's viewpoint?

The research questions which are to be explored in the dissertation are:

1. How has the partnership arrangement managed to enable staff to provide a seamless service to OSS and Housing customers?
2. What evidence is there to suggest that a single culture has developed?

Questions

1. What were the drivers for the partnership arrangement?
2. Why was SLH chosen as a partner
3. What were LCC objectives and what did LCC hope to achieve from the partnership arrangement
4. What were the long term objectives from LCC point of view
5. How do you envisage the future of the partnership in terms of joined up working?
6. Was it hoped that the staff from both organisations would have a joined up culture and objectives
7. In relation to future joined up services in terms of IT, do you think that's something for the future or is that being unrealistic?

1. + 2

You have to go back historically to where Liverpool was four and a half years ago.

Liverpool was a pretty poor performing council and initial research showed that the management of Liverpool City Council was uncoordinated, inflexible, inefficient and unresponsive to customer needs. It had been decided that the housing stock was going to be transferred to Registered Social Land Lords. Part of my remit when I was developing the shops was to try and bring in some partners and we did approach four or five RSL at the time, which the stock was being transferred over to. I called a meeting to talk to them at the Town Hall and at the time because this was relatively new, the RSL's were loathed to come into partnership with LCC due to LCC having a particularly poor reputation.

The RSL's wanted to distance themselves so that they could show that they would provide a better service than Liverpool had been able to do in the past. Most of them didn't want to take up any form of partnership. After a few months LCC were approached by two RSL's, one was CDS and the other was SLH. With CDS, they really wanted LCC to be involved with taking their out of hours calls in the call centre, which I think is already happening. This was to help them provide a better service for themselves. However SLH always teamed up for, and were very open to providing partnership work with LCC and there was an opportunity when we were developing the PFI in Speke to bring together a number of agencies which would be practical due to cost savings and would encourage joined up services. It would be cheaper to share space rather than having two separate office environments. SLH were quite open to coming in and at least sharing office space and then to look to develop some sort of partnership and then to perhaps take it further as things developed.

3. Liverpool was trying to be customer centric and really looking to providing the best service they could for the customers and because a decision had been taken to outsource the stock, LCC saw it as an opportunity to bring together the services in one point. What we were trying to get away from was single service reception points so again we didn't want people coming into a OSS being able to access everything other than housing, and

so there was an opportunity there to work in partnership so that the customer would only have to go to one single access point.

4. Again as I have mentioned before, I think from the practical aspect it was to reduce the costs at that particular shop, but the other thing I think was to show that LCC had really improved in the way that we could provide services and were leading the way.

5. If I am truthful I think it's going to be quite difficult to take it much further than what we've got at the moment. I think it's been quite innovative doing the data sharing protocol, I think that has helped, but because we work to different masters, it's going to be quite difficult to really integrate staff or to provide the same quality of service because we have our own standards and they have theirs. Obviously as a private enterprise they want to ensure they keep their own identity and sort of feel they are not another council service really, so I think there will always be a bit of a them and us and it's never going to be a true joined up service.

6. Yes I think that it was initially the hope that if a customer came in to the shop, it didn't really matter whether they would go to SLH staff or LCC staff, they would get the same level of service. It would be the same sort of culture behind the scenes if you like. But I think that it's impractical really because the whole culture of LCC has changed and really that can't have or hasn't had any type of impact on SLH, so really they are always going to be working to their own agenda. It's very difficult to try and influence their culture really.

8. Again it's something that we wanted to work towards and it was something that was highlighted quite early on, and to a certain extent we have got that because they were using the same database but I think because of data protection that is the sticking point. If we could get around the data protection act and share information so that we can provide better services then it's a real possibility, but until that happens it's just not going to happen. I think that there are certain barriers to joined up working for example it's difficult to find the right person in an organisation who can make a decision, whereas LCC have got rid of a lot of red tape, which other organisations haven't.

Appendix 2 – Transcribed Interview with South Liverpool Housing’s Customer Services Manager

Interview 02/11/01

Title of Dissertation: Speke One Stop Shop and South Liverpool Housing: is the partnership successful from the employees’ viewpoint?

The research questions which are to be explored in the dissertation are:

1. How has the partnership arrangement managed to enable staff to provide a seamless service to OSS and Housing customers?
2. What evidence is there to suggest that a single culture has developed?

Questions

1. What were the drivers for the partnership arrangement?
2. Why was SLH chosen as a partner
3. What were LCC objectives and what did LCC hope to achieve from the partnership arrangement
4. What were the long term objectives from LCC point of view
5. How do you envisage the future of the partnership in terms of joined up working?
6. Was it hoped that the staff from both organizations would have a joined up culture and objectives
7. In relation to future joined up services in terms of IT, do you think that’s something for the future or is that being unrealistic?

Q1 From South Liverpool Housing's point of view it was really an opportunity to develop our front line services and really to help us deliver excellent customer service. *One of our ethos's is to put the customer at the heart of everything we do and prior to moving into the Parklands complex we had an old office where we had very poor reception services but a lot of it we were constrained with the actual layout of the area as they were offices we had actually inherited and we knew we were going to be moving to new offices so we used the opportunity of moving to a new office to really plan and devise a completely different way of delivering customer service. We also recognised that there was a great opportunity of working in partnership with another organisation to benefit the customers of Speke.*

Q2 SLH is a stock transfer organisation and we took over management of 3500 properties in Speke in 1999, which meant that we did all of the Land Lord functions. The make up of the estate though and of our tenants is that a large proportion of them claimed Housing Benefit and were reliant on Housing Benefit as a means of income, so for us although we delivered Land Lord functions in repairs, maintenance and tenancy matters, the missing sort of link for us really was to generate additional income and make sure people's benefits were maximised and we saw the opportunity really to work closely with the City, particularly with the One Stop Shops to deliver a Housing Benefit Service to tenants. This has been a really big opportunity and also there was the missing link to what we couldn't deliver as the Land Lord as in general council services such as street lighting, rubbish removal and the other things that matter to people living in their homes. We felt the partnership arrangement would enhance our services in Land Lord functions and hopefully we could compliment the Council in the delivery of their services. I think because Speke is quite an isolated area of Liverpool and it is a very large Social Land Lord run estate it was a good opportunity as there is such a large concentration of people relying on the same services, to try and bring our services together.

Q3 The objectives really first of all were to enhance our customer service delivery, to increase customer satisfaction and we also were aware that previously our tenants had to travel a long way to access Housing Benefit advice and this service, especially as we have got such a low income level throughout our customer base, we realised that accessing this service had previously been difficult for tenants. So by putting it all under one roof in a local area in building that we knew people could access, we felt would make access to services more convenient and easier for the customer. We also like the idea of being able to offer extended opening hours as well initially to customers as previously we had only offered a 9.00am to 5.00pm service and we were interested in seeing whether people would be interested in accessing our services outside of normal office hours, and I think as well that we saw that the City Council's One Stop Shops had a good reputation and a very professional image and a very customer focused image towards customers and I think we thought we could learn a lot from that, that we could bring across to our own customer service delivery.

Q4 I think the long term objective was to have instead of seeing us as two separate services was to have more of a joined up service where perhaps we could even start to

share IT systems where a customer would not have to get up and move from a Liverpool City Council part to a South Liverpool Housing part of the office, where really a customer could come and get a whole range of services under the same roof and maybe even from the same organisation.

Q5 + 6 + 7 I think we introduced the data sharing protocol to try and get over some of the issues from data sharing. I think that now we have got over that we could look at maybe starting to integrate some of the IT but I think it is important as well that we do still keep the identity of the two organisations. I don't think either one of the organisations would particularly want to lose their own identity. I know at the moment it is still a sense of two different organisations under the same roof visually but I think the staff do *actually work together behind the scenes more jointly.*

Appendix 3 – The Customer Service Advisors Questionnaire

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Speke One Stop Shop and South Liverpool Housing: is this partnership successful from the employee’s viewpoint?

In order to assist with my MBA dissertation I would like to ask if I could take up a few minutes of your time and ask if you could complete the following questionnaire.

I have endeavoured to design the questionnaire to remain as anonymous as possible and can give an assurance that the findings from this research will remain strictly confidential and only will be used for the aforementioned dissertation. I would therefore ask that you be as open as possible in order for the findings to be meaningful.

Q1 Could I ask how long have you worked for your organization?

Years	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 - 4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5 - 7	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7 - 9	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10+	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2 How long have you been working in the Speke One Stop Shop?

Months	Less than 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 - 6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6 - 12	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12 - 18	<input type="checkbox"/>
	18 - 24	<input type="checkbox"/>

24+

☐

Q3

Have you an appreciation of what the Speke OSS and SLH partnership arrangement is?

YES

NOT SURE

NO

☐

☐

☐

IF NO GO TO Q4A

Q4

If Yes how was this communicated to you

Through induction

Through team meetings

Through word of mouth from colleagues

☐

☐

☐

Q4A

PLEASE ASK YOUR TEAM LEADER TO GIVE YOU AN OVERVIEW OF THE PARTNERSHIP. PLEASE THEN RECOMMENCE WITH THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick the box if this applied to you

☐

Q5

Do you feel that the partnership arrangement has enabled the staff to provide a more joined up, integrated service to the customer?

Yes

No

☐

☐

IF YES GO TO Q5A

IF NO GO TO Q5B

Q5A

If your response is YES, please use the below space to describe how the partnership arrangement has enabled you to provide a more joined up, seamless service.

Q5B

If your response is NO please use the below space to describe why the partnership arrangement has not enabled you to provide a more joined up, seamless service.

- 127 -

Q6 Please answer the positive and negative statements below. For each statement indicate, how strongly you agree or disagree, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, .3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = agree and 5 is strongly agree.

+ STATEMENT	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
"A single culture has developed between Liverpool City Council staff and SLH staff".	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
"If staff had access to each others computer systems, this would enable greater joined up working".	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
"Both sets of staff follow the same working procedures and protocols". (If you disagree or strongly disagree please outline your reasons in Q7)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 GO TO Q7	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 GO TO Q7	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
"Most team leaders promote the partnership arrangement positively".	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
"The data sharing protocol has helped deliver integrated services".	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

_ STATEMENT						
"Staff from both organisations only share the same counter area and there is little evidence of integrated working". (If you agree or strongly agree please outline your reasons in Q8)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 GO TO Q8	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 GO TO Q8
"Staff from both orgs are fully integrated"	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

Q7 Please out line why you feel staff from both organizations do not follow the same working procedures

and protocols

Q8 Please out line why you feel staff from both organizations only share the same counter area with little evidence of integrated working.

Q9 Do you feel that putting services under one roof has improved customer service delivery?

YES

☐

NO (if no please outline below the reason whys)

☐

Q10 Would you like to see Liverpool City Council and South Liverpool Housing services being delivered under the same roof by a single public organisation?

YES ☐

NO ☐

Q11 Would you like to maintain the separate and distinct brandings between the two organisations?

Yes ☐

NO ☐

Q12 Please indicate the average level of job satisfaction you enjoy on a day-to-day basis.

None ☐

Little ☐

Some ☐

High ☐

Very high ☐

Q13 What do you feel could be improved in order to give a greater level of integrated service to the customer

14 What do you feel are the main benefits that the partnership arrangement between Liverpool City Council and South Liverpool Housing brings to the organization which employs you?

Q15 If you were asked what “real” benefits come to the customer from the “partnership” – what would they be?

Thank you for your time

Appendix 4 – Focus Group Questions

Focus Group 10/01/05

Title of Dissertation: Housing and One Stop Shop Partnerships: are they successful from an employee's viewpoint?

The research questions that are to be explored in the dissertation are:

1. How has the partnership arrangement endeavored to enable staff to provide a seamless service to OSS and Housing customers?
2. What evidence is there to suggest that a single culture has developed.?

Questions

1. Why do you feel SLH was chosen as a partner?
2. What do you think the objectives of the partnership arrangement are?
3. What do you think the long-term objectives are?
4. How do you envisage the future of the partnership in terms of joined up working?
5. Do you feel staff from both organizations have a joint culture and share the same objectives?
6. In relation to future joined up services in terms of IT, do you think that's something for the future or is that being unrealistic?
7. Do you think one or other organization benefits the most from the partnership?
8. Why?
9. What do you think the customer benefits from the partnership?
10. Do you feel the data sharing agreement has helped deliver a joined up service?
11. Why?
12. What do you feel would improve the service in terms of joined up working?
13. Do you think the partnership offers a seamless service or is it just a case of two orgs who have co-located?
14. How do you think a joint culture could be developed further?
15. Do you think other partnerships should be entered into by LCC and RSL's?

Appendix 5 – Transcript of Team Managers Focus Group

Focus Group 10/01/05

1.

I think it was timing for them to move into the office. It was a good opportunity for the city council to have a presence in the Speke and Garston area.

The concentrated housing stock, made sense to partnership to provide a OSS and it was an ideal opportunity for the council to provide its services.

From the council it was an opportunity to role an OSS out in Speke so it made sense to join up as the services cross over in many ways.

From SLH's point of view it is a company that cant expand beyond housing. It was viewed that if we linked with the city council then it may give us an opportunity to take on other services that the council provides.

2.

To make the service efficient and to offer the customer more options. It was to give the customer more access to council services. I think the overall objective then is to really provide a seamless service to the customer gets their enquiry dealt with under on roof.

To make services more accessible and to improve the way in which we work compared to how we were in the past.

3.

It works so far as when a customer has a query about an SLH or Council issue we can sort it out there and then. I would so though that there is a lot we could improve on that doesn't go on. Even though we have the data sharing protocol I don't feel we make full use of that. I don't think anyone has got the time or resource to develop the data sharing protocol.

I think a lot of that comes down to senior management. I don't feel managers from SLH are as committed as those from LCC

Yes I agree. There was supposed to be regular meetings but no one seems to have the time to organise these.

I don't think it is a time factor, I just done think that SLH management are as committed to the development of the partnership.

Yes may be your right. I agree.

When I worked on the counter I felt that SLH's back office staff did not have a full understanding of what LCC OSS does and what they are about. They didn't know what the OSS staff did. I knew about it because I made it my business and I asked. I made use of the data sharing protocol but I feel there is a lot more information that we should be sharing in the interest of the customer. I don't feel that both organisations are very proactive in passing information on to each other. We only seem to do this with the obvious queries. We should look at doing this for each customer enquiry as a matter or cause.

It has helped SLH deliver their services more efficiently, for example before we partnered SLH would have to ring the contact centre if a property had an infestation problem. Now we can ask an LCC member of staff to log a job on LCC's pest control system. I feel that SLH benefits more from the partnership than LCC does.

Yes I agree, we definitely get more out of the arrangements.

We can also ask LCC staff to look at other environmental issues, which we would previously have to log with the contact centre.

I feel that we could share more information about what is going on in the community. For example I only found out about a customer forum by accident. We should be sharing our contacts and carrying out joint community engagement as one organisation rather than two separate organisations.

There must be lots of things we don't know about each other that would help us deliver a fully integrated service.

Q4

Can't go backwards from where we are now. Maybe the long-term future will be the link up of IT. We could have read only access. This would stop us having to leave our seats.

This is in the pipeline I think with the national Benefits Project, which is underway. I have an update meeting next week. This will enable us to access as HB claim.

Yes but that's just benefits. SLH and LCC can offer a lot more than just this e.g. repairs and environmental issues. We should be able to check each other's system.

I see yes so we could all be generic.

I think that in the future now that LCC are running more like a business, I can see the council actually dealing with Sylph's front line.

Like out sourcing?

Yes that could be one way. SLH tend to think only about benefit claims, as this is our main income source. But yes I suppose LCC could deliver our services.

Well we already do out of hours telephone calls for CDS so there is no reason why LCC can't do your role.

This could be a long-term objective.

Oh I can see our jobs going here!

Q Do you think it would be beneficial for SLH to have access to M and G?

Yes definitely as all our customer volumes are kept manually.

Q7

Definitely SLH as we get a lot out of LCC in terms of our benefit claims. Since we have been in the partnership our relationship has improved with the back office. We now actually talk to each other. It goes to show that our relationship with the back office has improved, as we have been chosen o pilot the NBP.

Q8

More chose and improved service. I remember when the shop first opened the customer would sit with an SLH member of staff and then go and sit with an LCC member of staff to have each separate enquiry dealt with. Now it is not like that, we liase with each other and we do the moving around rather than the customer.

Yes I agree it was a bit stand offish in the beginning. It was very defines but with in 4 or 5 months e had built up a good working relation ship with each other, well at least the front line staff had.

There is still a bit of uncertainty over confidentiality. If this was a bit more transparent then I think things would work a lot better. For instance I we had joint meetings more regularly we would find out what is going on in others organisation and things that wee are uncertain about could be ironed out.

Q10

I think it has as before it was drawn up people were uncertain about what they could discuss.

Yes it was a hurdle and everyone became more relaxed about data sharing

Q11

Publicity. I don't think there has been any effective publicity about how we work with each other

Yes this is right. I have recently started with LCC from SLH and I am flabbergasted as to what LCC does. The briefings we had in SLH just didn't cover what the council did. There is a complete lack of understanding about what the council actually does.

Yes, if we had LCC's intranet this would help immensely

I think we should have joint training sessions as well. We need to be doing joint community engagement and really push what we are doing. There is such a big overlap in our services but we don't advertise this and work together on this. Staff from both organisations need to know what each others service does so we can all feed in effectively. There is definitely a lack of understanding.

Q13

Yes two organisations just amalgamated.

I think we are on the first step to partnership working

Q14

Definitely two cultures

Why

Very clear demarcations in each organisations role. Feel LCC is very structured and not so much in SLH.

SLH are not fully resourced and LCC are

I feel that SLH managers are very doctorial and don't want to get involved in the partnership

Yes there is a lot of uncertainty with our managers. Some have left and have not been replaced.

The counter staff get on really well and communicate well between each other. I feel that LCC staff seem to communicate well between each other and this could be because of your JV with BT as they are experts in communication. Each department to know what they are all doing. In SLH we don't get to find out what each dept is doing.

I feel that SLH are in the same position as LCC where before we developed the Customer Contact Strategy. LCC knew we needed to change, as there was little communication. I think that SLH needs to change and communicate interdepartmentally.

Your right we don't know what each of our departments doing. For example people in our back office didn't even know we worked a shift pattern. Also SLH departments are very unwilling to help the front line staff.

LCC used to be exactly like that before the shops developed.

Q Do you feel SLH have a silo mentality?

Yes we don't know what other departments are doing and they are not interested in what we are doing.

Q How do you think a joint culture could be developed?

Training and some changes to senior management. There is defiantly a lack of understanding of what the OSS does. We need to promote ourselves jointly. I feel some senior managers are barriers.

Q15

Yes. This one was set up as pilot and I do feel it has worked.

It hasn't really developed or progressed though but it has worked. Even at the level we have achieved so far I still feel that it has worked.

Q What else has held the development back? I.e. IT data protection

I feel all these points can be overcome but I don't feel as though the commitments from SLH managers are there.

Appendix 6 – Questionnaire (Chester University College and Warrington Collegiate Institute – Case Study)

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Chester University College and Warrington Collegiate Institute partnership: testing a conceptual model

In order to assist with my MBA dissertation I would like to ask if I could take up a few minutes of your time and ask if you could complete the following questionnaire.

I have endeavoured to design the questionnaire to remain as anonymous as possible and can give an assurance that the findings from this research will remain strictly confidential and only will be used for the aforementioned dissertation. I would therefore ask that you be as open as possible in order for the findings to be meaningful.

Q1 Could I ask how long have you worked for your organization?

Years	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 - 4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5 - 7	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7 - 9	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10+	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2 How long have you been working in Chester Business School?

Months	Less than 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 - 6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6 - 12	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12 - 18	<input type="checkbox"/>
	18 - 24	<input type="checkbox"/>
	24+	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3

Were the reasons for the merger between Chester and Warrington communicated to you?

YES

NOT SURE

NO

☐

☐

☐

IF NO GO TO Q4A

Q4

If Yes how was this communicated to you

Q4A

If No do you feel you would have benefited from better communication. If yes please briefly outline the reasons why

YES (please give reasons why)

☐

NOT SURE

NO

☐

☐

IF NO GO TO Q4A

Q5

Do you feel that the merger has enabled the staff to provide a more joined up, integrated service to the students at both campuses?

Yes

No

☐

☐

IF YES GO TO Q5A

IF NO GO TO Q5B

Q5A If your response is YES, please use the below space to describe how the merger has enabled you to provide a more joined up, seamless service.

Q5B If your response is NO please use the below space to describe why the merger has not enabled you to provide a more joined up, seamless service.

Q5A

+ STATEMENT

“The merger has enabled us to develop joined up working”. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

“Most staff promote the merger positively”. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

“Staff from both Chester and Warrington are generic”. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

STATEMENT

“Staff from both Chester and Warrington do not really engage with each other”. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

(If you agree or strongly agree please outline your reasons in Q8) **GO TO Q8** **GO TO Q8**

“Staff from both orgs are fully integrated” ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

Q7 Please out line why you feel staff from both campuses do not follow the same working procedures and protocols

Q8 Please out line why you feel staff from both Chester and Warrington might not engage with each other.

.....

Q9 Do you feel that sharing office space on both sites has improved customer service delivery?

YES ☐

NO (if no please outline below the reason whys) ☐

10 Do you have regular meetings with staff from Chester and Warrington?

YES (if yes please out line if you feel you gain benefit from regular communication) ☐

NO (if no do you feel regular communication would help create a single culture) ☐

Q11 Would you like to maintain the separate characteristics between Chester and Warrington?

YES ☐

NO ☐

Q12 Please indicate the average level of job satisfaction you enjoy on a day-to-day basis.

None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Little	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some	<input type="checkbox"/>
High	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very high	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q13 What do you feel could be improved in order to further develop a single culture between Chester and Warrington

Q14 What do you feel are the main benefits that the merger between Chester and Warrington brings to the organization which employs you?

Q15 If you were asked what could improve the arrangement between Chester and Warrington – what would they be?

Thank you for your time

Appendix 7 – Case Study (University College Chester and Warrington Collegiate Institute)

An investigation into a merger between two Public Sector HE Institutes: University College Chester and Warrington Collegiate Institute.

Introduction

From this limited theory and the researchers analysis of data collected to date, a conceptual model has been developed. This model is called the “**CHANGED**” Model, which stands for:

- **C**ommitment
- **H**olistic
- **A**ttitude
- **N**etworking
- **G**eneric
- **E**ngage
- **D**evelop

This model is presented and explained overleaf in **Figure 5**.

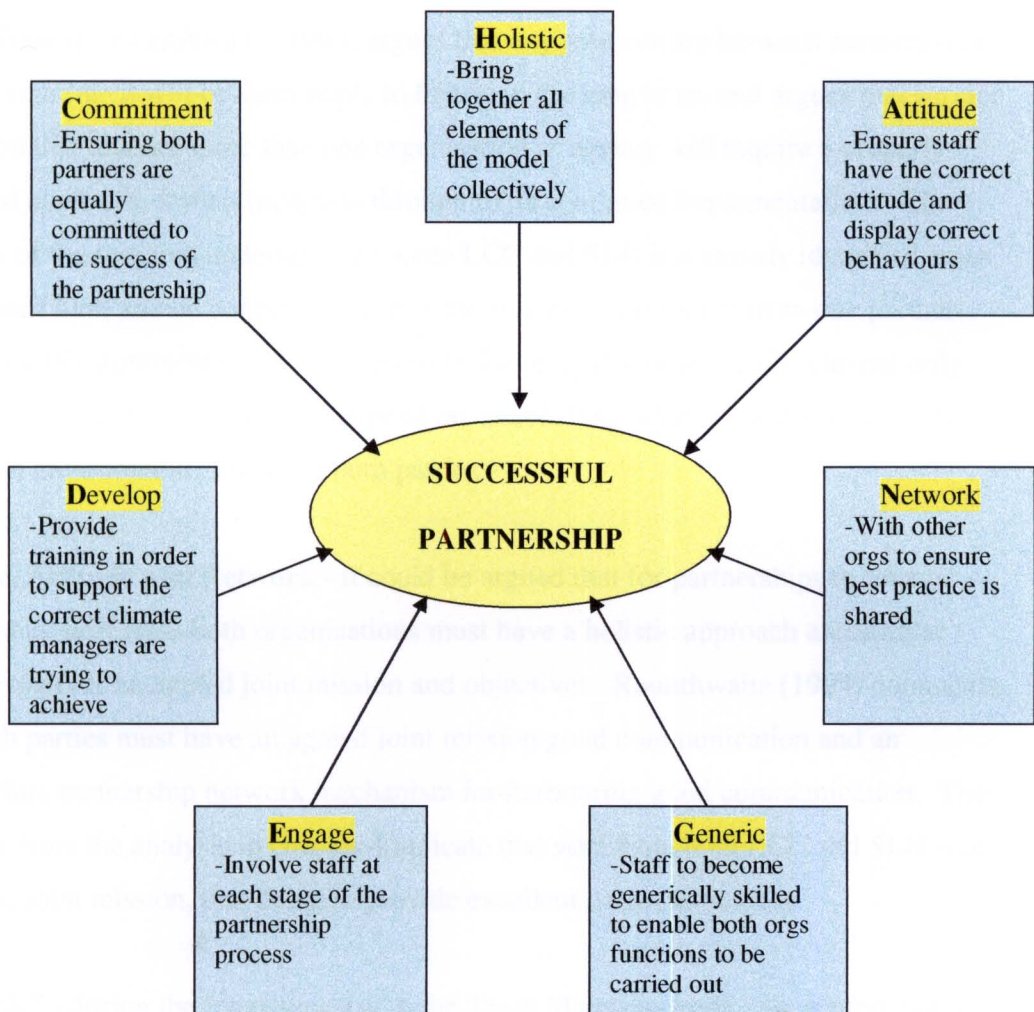


Figure 5: The “CHANGED” Model – 7 Elements to a Successful Partnership

Commitment - Rounthwaite (1994) argues that any relationship between partners that lacks commitment will be susceptible to failure in the long term, and argues that service provision that touches more than one organisation or agency will require a properly designed approach, from its inception through to its continued implementation. The analysis of the research undertaken between LCC and SLH has already identified areas where staff have shown concern regarding the lack of commitment from one partner. Rounthwaite's argument is also reinforced by Fuller and Vassie (2002) who not only suggest that effective partnerships depend on establishing adequate levels of trust, but also must have commitment from both parties.

Holistic, Attitude and Network - it could be argued that for partnerships to remain sustainable, staff from both organisations must have a holistic approach and similar attitude towards an agreed joint mission and objectives. Rounthwaite (1994) comments that both parties must have an agreed joint mission good communication and an appropriate partnership network mechanism for harbouring good communication. The findings from the analysis in chapter 4 indicate that staff from both LCC and SLH share the same joint mission, that being to provide excellent customer service.

“Generic” - during the focus group with the Team Managers staff commented that they could become generic in order to align cultures and provide a more integrated service. The sharing of IT would assist to enable this.

Engage – Educe Limited has developed a tool kit in order for partnerships to carry out a “quick health check”, which is discussed fully in chapter 2. The tool kit suggests the use of carrying out eight tests which involve:

1. Collaboration
2. Common interest
3. Using the word “we”
4. Mutually accountable

5. Share responsibilities and rewards
6. Develop and maintain trust
7. Willing to change
8. Seek to improve

In order for each strands of this tool kit to be practice it could be argued that partners are required to engage with each other.

Develop - VCE Information Technology and Management Company

(www.opax.swin.edu.au) state that various factors in an organisation can contribute to the culture or climate and suggest ways in which managers can create and maintain the desired climate/culture. One of these ways is to develop staff through training. The findings from the questionnaire analysis also identified that staff felt joint training as a factor which could build a joint culture. The development of partnerships is also mentioned by Educe Limited as part of their “Eight Tests of a Healthy partnership model, mentioned above.

The research undertaken with University College Chester and Warrington

Collegiate institute merger has been carried out in order to establish if the

“CHANGED” model could be applied in this partnership/merger. A decision was taken to use a very selective sample for this piece of research, partly due to the location of the two campuses and the author’s prior inclination (partially based on discussions with Chester University lecturers) that two cultures may be considered to exist between the two campuses.

Back ground to the Merger

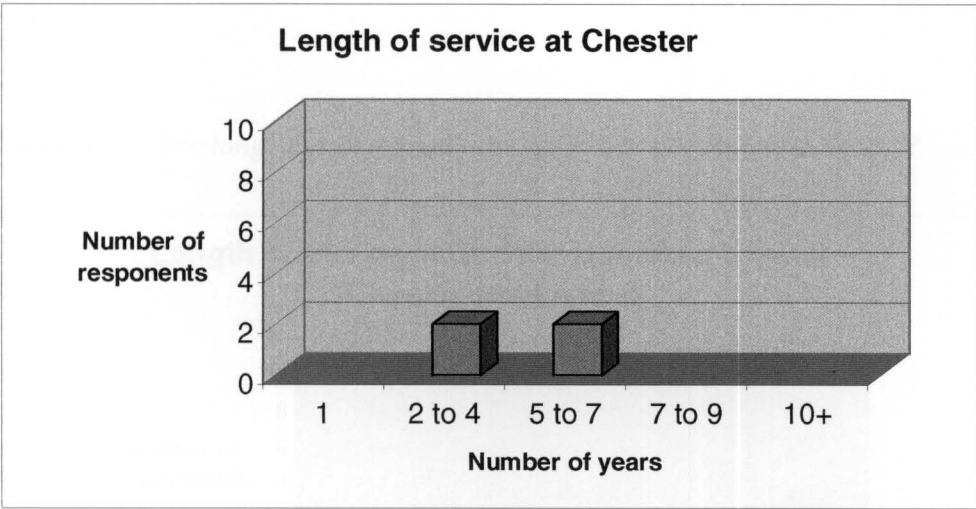
University College Chester's annual business plan states that a merger took place between the Faculty of Higher Education of Warrington Collegiate Institute and University College Chester, following more than two years of strategic planning and negotiation between the two establishments. This involved the acquisition of the Warrington campus for which a five-year development plan has been initiated for the new campus. The merger was subject to restructuring funds from HEFCE, which enabled University College Chester to deal with a backlog of maintenance work at the Padgate campus.

It was envisaged that investment would have to be made in IT and a proactive recruitment and marketing campaign would have to be launched in order to establish a joint identity with the Warrington campus. The expansion of the College has brought with it acceleration in the building and refurbishment programme at the Chester, Warrington and off campus sites. It could therefore be argued that for the growth of one organisation, a partnership strategy is required. (Goss et.al 1998) would agree with this argument, stating the strategic potential of providing a best value service in an organisation can be exploited through partnership arrangements.

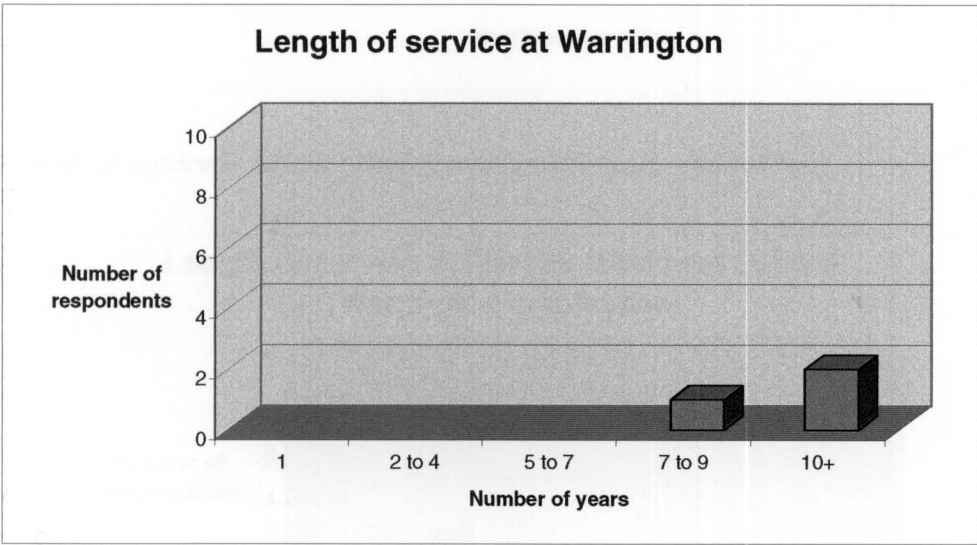
Research Design

A questionnaire was designed encompassing elements from the "CHANGED" model and the findings from the research, which took place between LCC and SLH. The questionnaire was then sent to a small sample of staff from both Chester and Warrington campuses. Of those staff that took the time to complete and return the questionnaire, the data was analysed to see if the results from this bore any resemblance to the findings from the LCC and SLH research. The full questionnaire can found in **appendix 6**.

Question 1: *How long have you worked for your organisation?*



Length of service at University College Chester

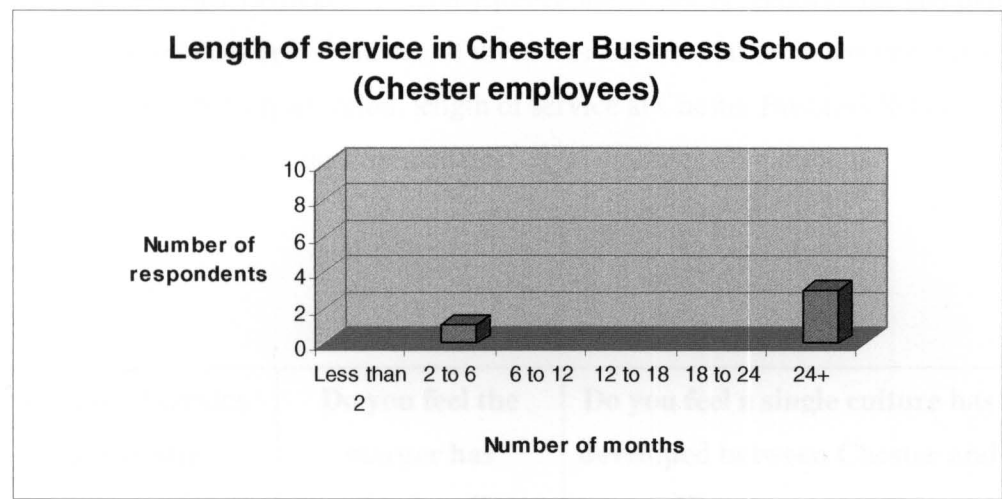


Length of service at Warrington Collegiate Institute

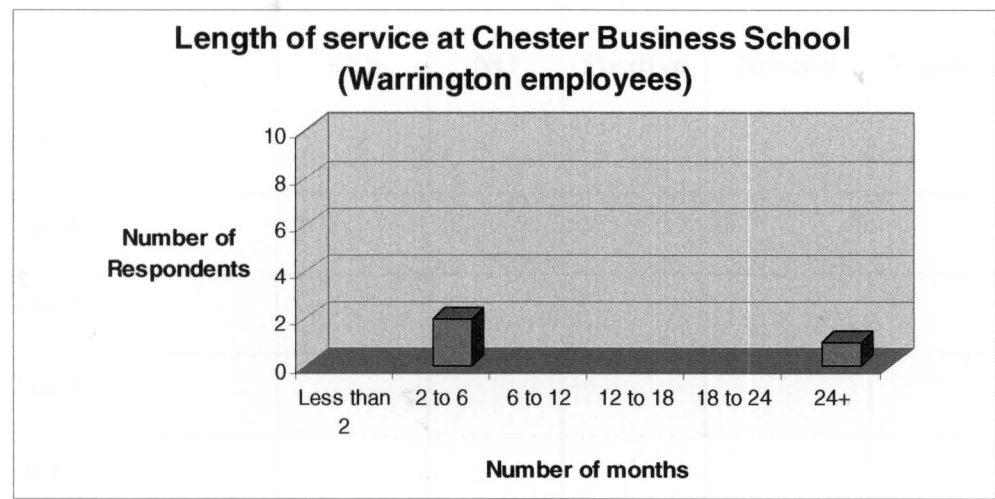
This question was asked in order to ascertain if the length of time both sets of staff had worked for either Chester or Warrington bore any relation to the way in which the questions were answered in the questionnaire. As the graphs indicate there was an even split of staff who had worked at Chester for between two and four years and five and seven years. When comparing this to the response from Warrington staff it is interesting

to see that 67% of staff had worked for the institute for ten or more years, and the remaining 33% of staff had been with the institute for between seven and nine years.

Question 2: *How long have you been working in Chester Business School?*



Length of service in Chester Business School (Chester employees)



Length of service at Chester Business School (Warrington employees)

Question 6.2 indicated that 75% of the Chester staff who completed the questionnaire had been working at Chester Business school for twenty four plus months whilst the other 25% had only worked in the Business School for between two and six months. When comparing this to the responses received from the Warrington staff it is interesting to see that only 25% of the staff had been working in Chester Business School for more than two years whilst 75% of staff had only joined the business school in the last two to six months. The tables below indicate if there was any correlation in answers between length of service at either organisation, length of service at Chester Business School, to further questions asked in the questionnaire relating to the research questions.

Length of service at Chester	Do you feel the merger has enabled staff to provide a more joined up service?		Do you feel a single culture has developed between Chester and Warrington staff		
	YES	NO	Positive	Neutral	Negative
> 1 year					
2 to 4	2		1	1	
5 to 7	1	1	1		1
7 to 9					
10 +					

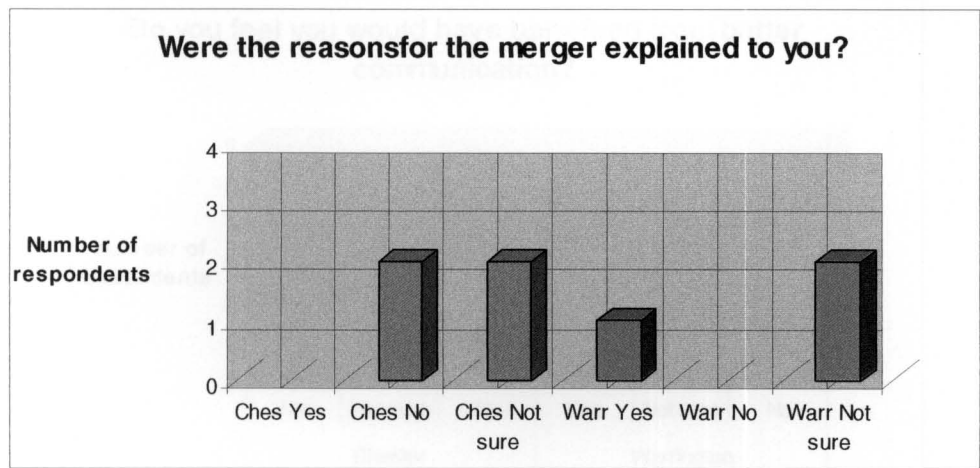
Sample showing if any correlation between length of service at Chester and questions asked relating to the research questions

Length of service at Warrington	Do you feel the merger has enabled staff to provide a more joined up service?		Do you feel a single culture has developed between Chester and Warrington staff		
	YES	NO	Positive	Neutral	Negative
> 1 year					
2 to 4					
5 to 7					
7 to 9		1			1
10 +		2			2

Sample showing if any correlation between length of service at Warrington and questions asked relating to the research questions

From the analysis illustrated above it would appear that the staff from the Warrington campus that completed the questionnaire have answered the two questions identified more negatively than the staff from the Chester Campus. It is interesting to see that the Warrington staff have a length of service between seven and ten plus years compared to the staff at the Chester campus who have a length of service between two and seven years. It could therefore be argued that there is a correlation between length of service and response.

Question 3: *Were the reasons for the merger between Chester and Warrington communicated to you?*



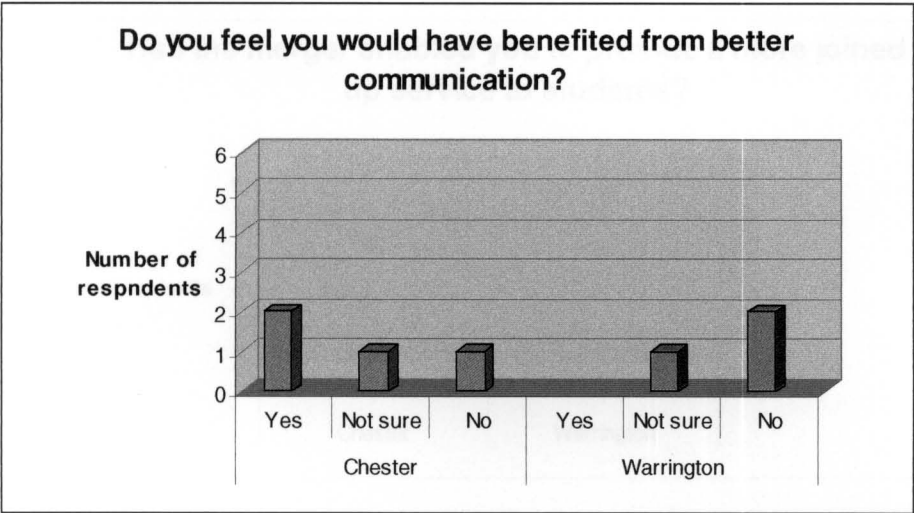
Graph to show if the reasons for the merger were explained to staff

It would appear from the responses given to question 3 that only 25% of the Warrington staff actually had the merger explained to them, compared to none of the staff at the Chester Campus. It is interesting to note however that both sets of staff responded that they were unsure if the merger had been explained to them (50% of the Chester staff and 75% of the Warrington staff).

Question 4: *If yes how was this communicated to you?*

If staff responded YES to question 3, they were asked to outline how the merger was communicated to them. Unfortunately no benefit could be obtained from this question due to the small percentage of staff from the Warrington campus that did respond YES, either not commenting or not being able to remember how the merger was communicated to them.

Question 4A



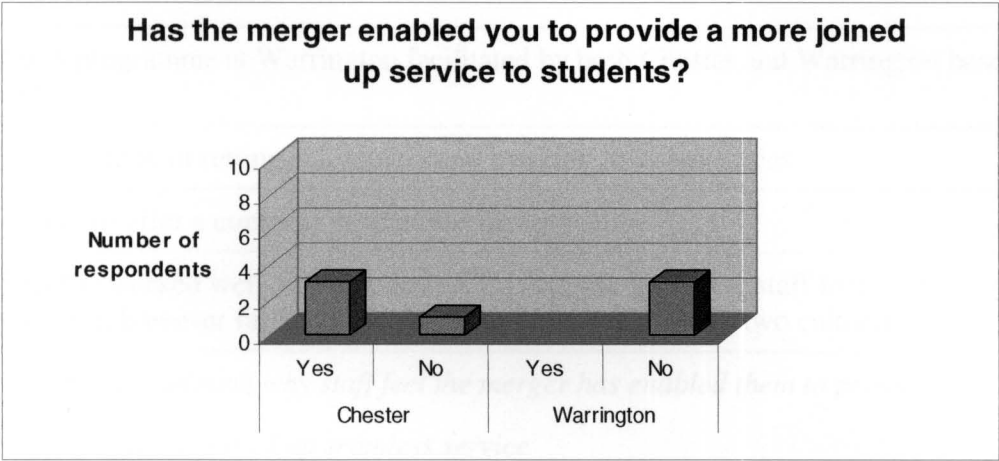
Graph to show if staff feel they would have benefited from better communication

75% of Chester staff felt that they would have benefited from better communication in contrast to 75% of staff from the Warrington campus that responded NO to this question. If staff had responded NO to question 4A, they were asked to comment if they felt they would have benefited from better communication. This question generated multi comments from both sets of staff, which are detailed below.

Comment Category
To give purpose
A discussion of the proposal rather than merely a statement of the event would have encouraged 'ownership'. It would have been useful to have a clearer picture of why the merger took place and how it was to operate.

Comments outlining why staff feel they would have benefited from better communication

Question 5: *Do you feel that the merger has enabled staff to provide a more joined up, integrated service to the students at both campuses?*



Graph to show if staff feel the merger has enabled them to provide a more joined up service to students.

From this question asked, the analysis shows that the Chester staff had a far greater positive response rate with 75% of respondents claiming that the merger had enabled them to provide amore joined up service to the student as apposed to 0% of the staff from the Warrington Campus.

Question 5A:

If candidates had answered YES to question 5 they were asked to comment on their reasons. This question generated various comments from respondents which are detailed in overleaf.

Comment Category
MBA programme at Warrington facilitated by both Chester and Warrington based staff
Co-operation in setting assignment and marking across modules.
Ability to offer a common programme on both sites
This has worked well on MBA and LCC programmes where staff from both sites are involved, however far less so at under graduate level where two cultures still exist

Comments outlining why staff feel the merger has enabled them to provide a more joined up seamless service

Question 5B:

As with question 5A, respondents who had answered NO to question 5 were again asked to comment on their reasons. This question generated very interesting and strong opinions from respondents, which are detailed overleaf.

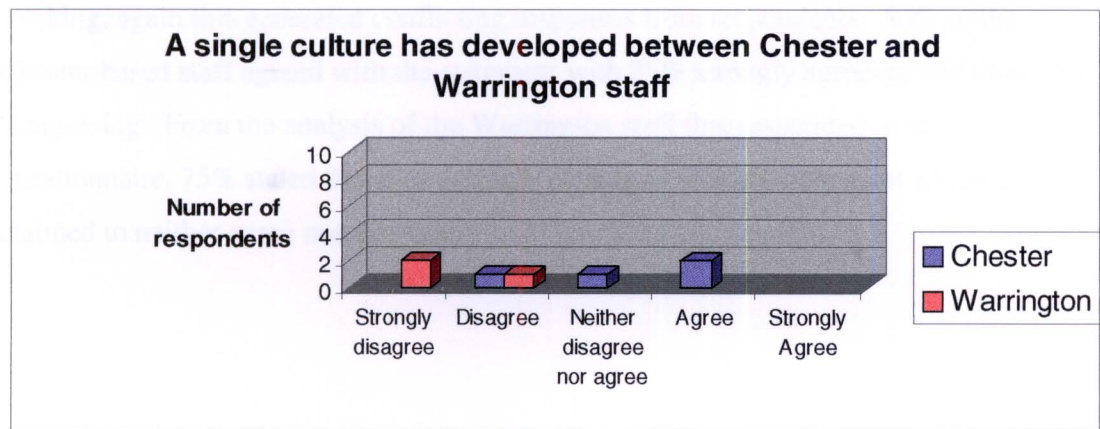
Comment Category
At under graduate level, two cultures exist.
Despite attempts to fully integrate the two campuses, they are quite distinct in terms of student segmentation. Warrington attracts primarily part time business students, where learning styles and operational needs are quite different from full time students. At present Warrington students are being “forced” to take programmes designed for Chester students and this is not as effective as it might be. Chester students are relatively unaffected by the Warrington experience.
Because we have distinct students (Warrington) on distinct sites with distinct needs, with distinct degrees and regulations.
No strategy for the future development of the Warrington campus
No induction to Chester’s policies/procedures on a day-to-day level.
No attempt to integrate staff from the two sites
Lack of consideration in timetabling across sites for Warrington based staff.
No sharing of best practice.
No involvement in admissions regarding potential new students.
No summer school
No involvement in “clearing” confusion over running “Old Liverpool, “New Liverpool” and “Manchester” degrees simultaneously across two sites on both full and part time basis.
Assessment forms that make no sense and raise questions of validity.
No base/resource at Chester for Warrington staff.
Issues should have been addressed from the start of the merger, it is after all what people who are highly qualified to teach on a regular basis teach, but fail to put into action.

*Comments outlining why staff feel the merger has not enabled them to provide
a more joined up seamless service*

Question 6:

Again a Likert scale was used to identify the staff responses to a series of positive and negative statements. The same scoring mechanism which was used for the research conducted with LCC and SLH was adopted, where 5 = strongly disagree, 4 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 2 = agree and 1 = strongly agree. For each of the seven statements a graph has been presented to show all respondents answers. From the answers, a scoring mechanism as described by Fisher (2004) was used, where a rating of 1 to 5 was given for each respondent's answers. An individual score has been calculated for each respondent from both organizations and an overall mean average has been calculated for each organisation.

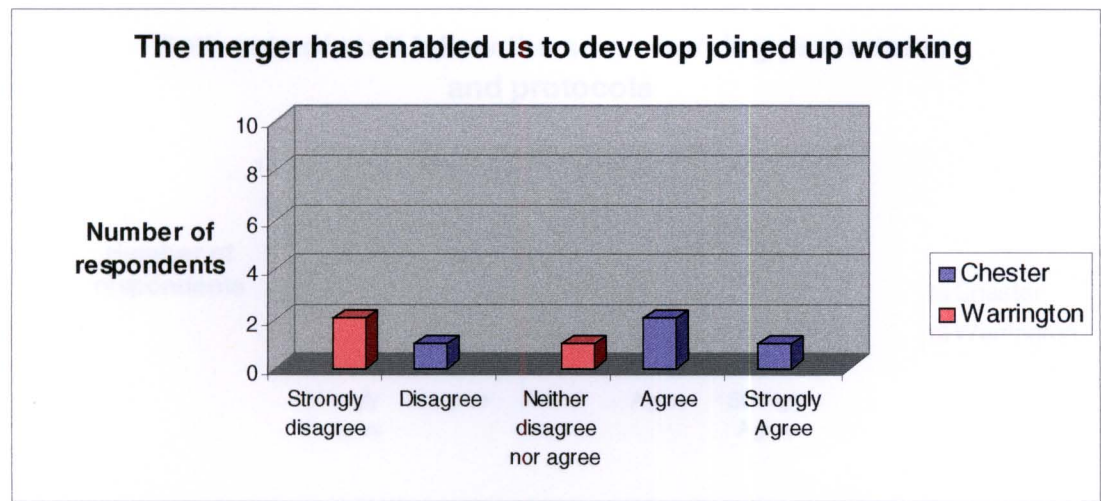
Statement 6.1



Graph to show if staff feel a single culture has developed between Chester and Warrington staff

75% of Warrington based staff strongly disagreed with this statement with the remaining 25% disagreeing. This response rate from the Chester based staff was more positive with 50% of staff agreeing with the statement, 25% disagreeing and 25% who stated that they neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement.

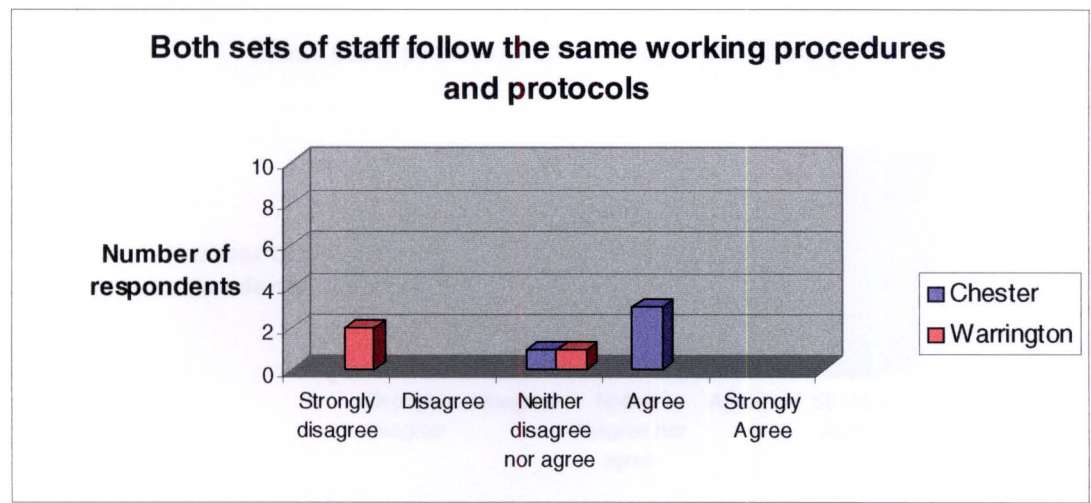
Statement 6.2



Graph to show if staff feel the merger enabled joined up working

When staff from both campuses were asked if they felt the merger had enable joined up working, again this generated conflicting responses from respondents. 50% of the Chester based staff agreed with the statement with 25% strongly agreeing and only 25% disagreeing. From the analysis of the Warrington staff that responded to the questionnaire, 75% stated that they strongly disagreed with the statement whilst 25% claimed to neither agree nor disagree.

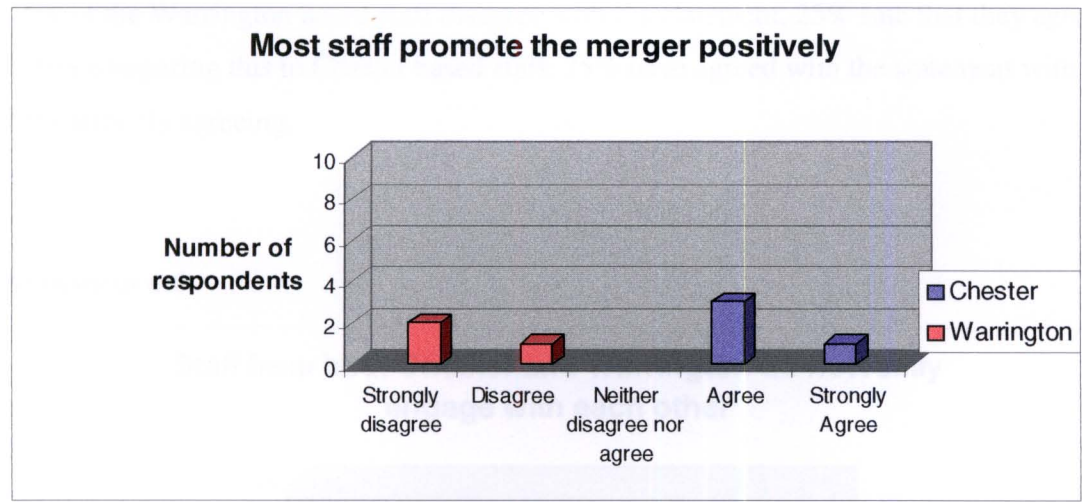
Statement 6.3



Graph to show if staff follow the same working procedures and protocols

Interesting enough the analysis of statement 6.3 begins to highlight a trend in responses. Again a high percentage of Chester based staff agreed with the statement (75%) whilst exactly the same percentage of the Warrington based staff strongly disagreed with the statement.

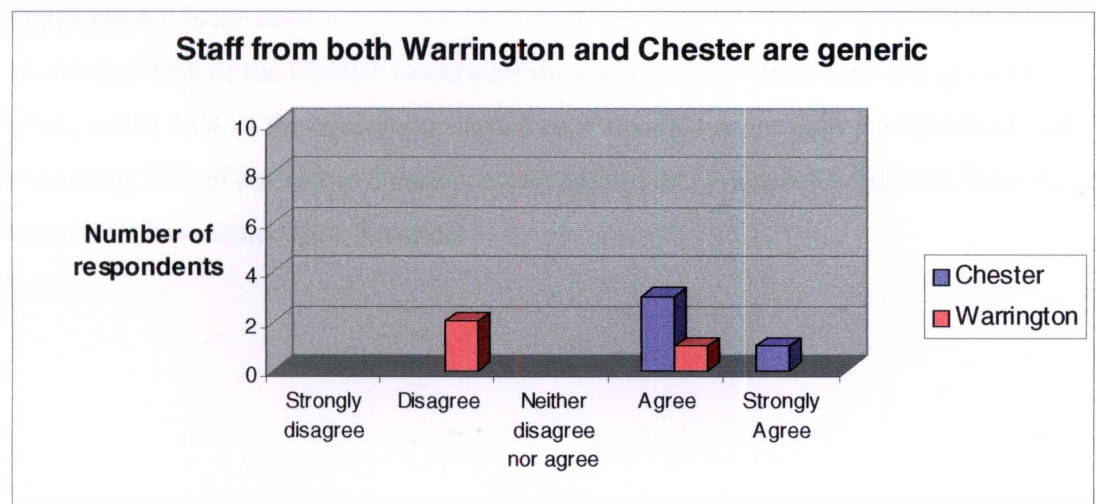
Statement 6.4



Graph to show if staff feel the merger is promoted positively

From the analysis of statement 6.4 the trend continues with 100% of Chester based staff either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement whilst 100% of the Warrington based staff either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

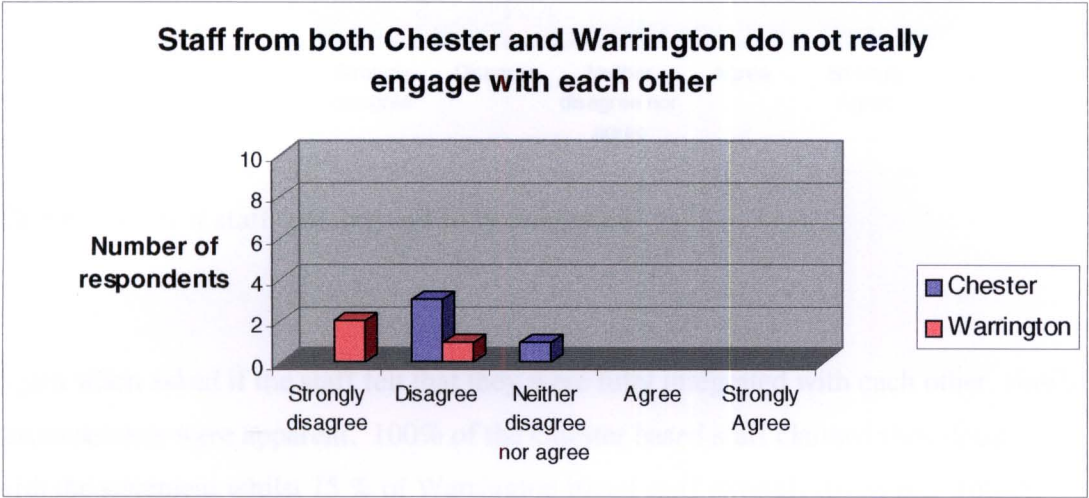
Statement 6.5



Graph to show if staff feel both sets of staff are generic

In statement 6.5 there is a slight variation from the trend in responses. This time although 75% of the Warrington based staff disagree with the statement, 25% sate that they agree. When comparing this to Chester based staff, 75% have agreed with the statement with 25% strongly agreeing.

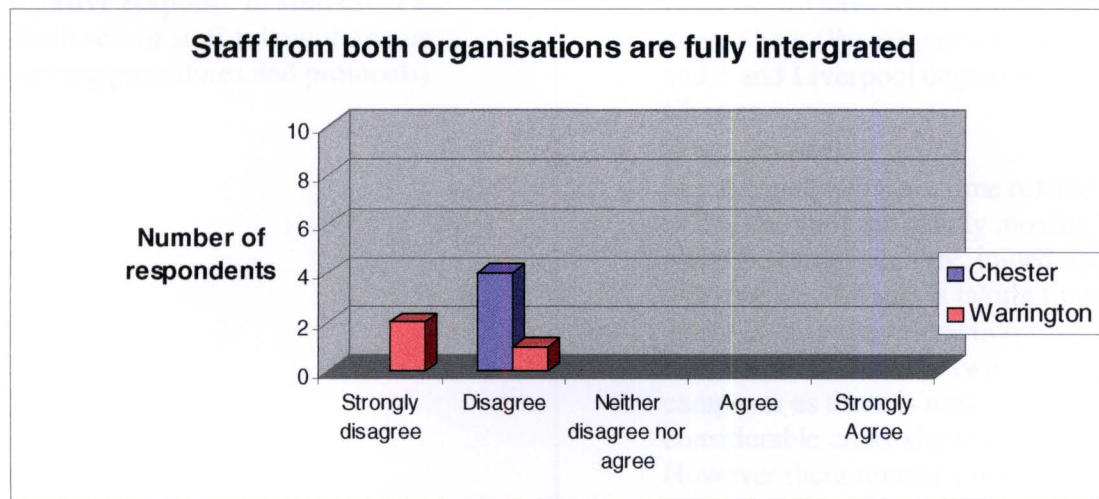
Statement 6.6



Graph showing if staff feel they do not engage with each other

Statement 6.6 is the statement which both staff had a similar viewpoint on. The analysis shows that 75% of the Chester based staff do not feel both sets of staff engage with each other, whilst 75% of the Warrington based staff strongly agree with the statement. The remaining 25% of staff from Chester neither agreed nor disagreed whilst the Warrington based staff have stated they disagree.

Statement 6.7



Graph to show if staff feel they are fully integrated

Again when asked if the staff felt that they were fully integrated with each other, similar response rates were apparent. 100% of the Chester based staff claimed they disagreed with the statement whilst 75 % of Warrington based staff strongly disagreed with the remaining 25% disagreeing with the statement.

Question 7 and 8

If staff answered negatively to statement 6.3 (both sets of staff follow the same working procedures and protocols) and positively to statement 6.7 (staff from Chester and Warrington do not really engage wit each other), they were asked in questions 7 and 8 to make comment. These questions again generated some very interesting comments which have been extracted from the data and represented in overleaf.

	Additional Comments
<p>Negative response to statement 6.3 (Both sets of staff follow the same working procedures and protocols)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because we have Manchester degree here (Warrington) level 2 and 3 and Liverpool degree in Chester. • What protocols • My disagreements are time related in that the staff are slowly moving towards a single culture, joined up working etc, but this is taking time. There is far more interaction between staff from the two campuses as there is now considerable cross-site teaching. However there remain some cultural and practical differences. • Protocols are not the issue really
<p>Positive response to statement 6.6 (Staff from both Chester and Warrington do not really engage with each other)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never given the opportunity to originally. • Some staff from Chester have never been to Warrington • Because we don't have enough opportunities to swap ideas and good practice. • Not enough joint meetings. • Distance – 36 miles separate the campuses. • Time – by its nature university lecturing lends itself to large amounts of unsupervised activity. Staffs are busy enough with their workload. A forced commute through cross-site teaching only adds to time issues. • Practicality - No base room for Warrington staff at Chester. • Some difficulties in integrating the teams at Warrington as the staff are drawn from two old Warrington teams.

Additional Comments from respondents for statements 6.3 and 6.6

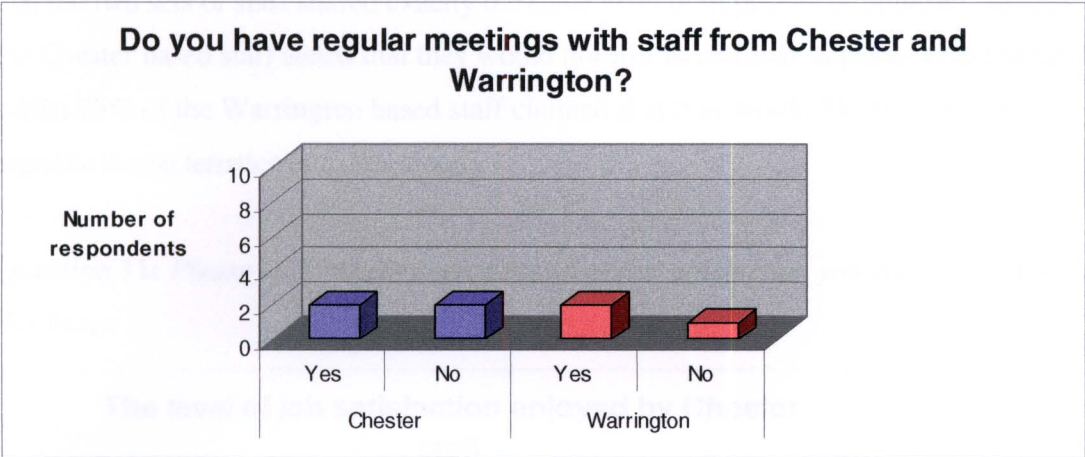
Similar to the analysis in Chapter 4, following Fisher’s (2004) model, again each respondents answers were given a rating of between 1 to 5 where the score 1 represented “strongly agree” and 5 represented “strongly disagree”. The calculation was then reversed when scoring a negative statement. Each statement for each respondent has been scored and the “mean” average calculated in order to analyse if the respondents had a negative or positive attitude toward the merger. From this score an overall “mean” score for each campus has been calculated. A maximum ‘mean’ rating for a positive response equated to an overall score of 1 and a maximum ‘mean’ rating for a negative response equated to an overall ‘mean score of 5. This analysis is illustrated below.

Chester respondents	Individual score	Overall score as a mean average	Chester’s overall mean score
Respondent 1	16	2.2	2.3
Respondent 2	20	2.8	
Respondent 3	16	2.2	
Respondent 4	15	2.1	
Warrington respondents	Individual score	Overall score as a mean average	Warrington’s overall mean score
Respondent 1	35	5	4.4
Respondent 2	35	5	
Respondent 3	24	3.4	

Likert Scale Analysis (Chester and Warrington campuses)

From the analysis it is clear that the respondents from the Chester campuses total ‘mean’ score was far lower than that of the staff from the Chester campus.

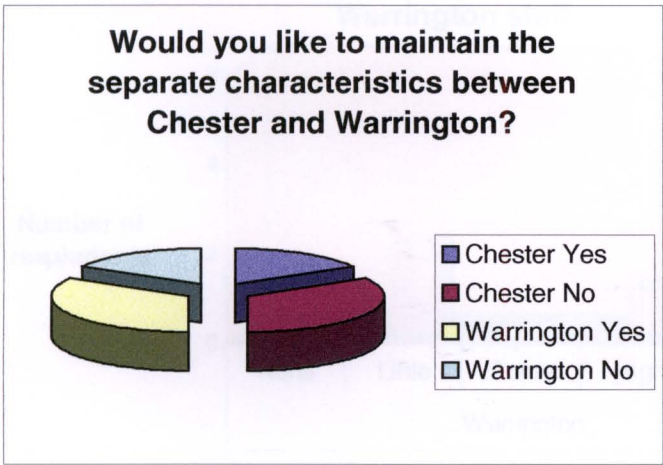
Question 9: *Do you have regular meetings with staff from Chester and Warrington?*



Graph showing the number of staff who have regular meetings

When asked this question half of the respondents from the Chester campus stated that they did have regular meeting with the staff from the Warrington campus and half stated that they did not. When looking at the analysis of data from the Warrington respondents, 75% of staff claimed that they met on a regular basis with the Warrington based staff and only 25% stated that they did not.

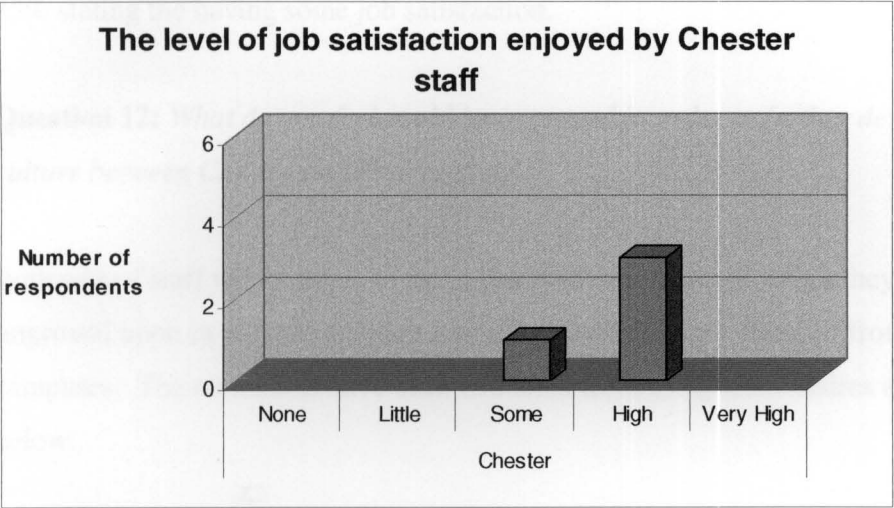
Question 10: *Would you like to maintain the separate characteristics between Chester and Warrington?*



Graph to show if staff would like to maintain separate characteristics

The findings from the analysis of question 10 were very interesting as it was apparent that the two sets of staff shared exactly the same level of opposites of opinion. 75% of the Chester based staff stated that they would not like to maintain separate characteristics whilst 75% of the Warrington based staff claimed that they would like to maintain separate characteristics of each campus.

Question 11: Please indicate the average level of job satisfaction you enjoy on a day-to-day basis



Level of job satisfaction enjoyed by Chester staff



Level of job satisfaction enjoyed by Warrington staff

This question was asked to see if there were any similarities in the level of job satisfaction enjoyed by both sets of staff following the merger. It is interesting to see that the analysis of this question followed a similar trend to the analysis of the Likert scale. It would appear that the Warrington based staff have a much lower level of job satisfaction than the Chester based staff with 75% of staff claiming to have little job satisfaction and only 25% stating they have a high level of job satisfaction. Looking at the analysis from the Chester based staff, 75% claimed to have a high level of job satisfaction and only 25% stating the having some job satisfaction.

Question 12: *What do you feel could be improved in order to further develop a single culture between Chester and Warrington?*

Both sets of staff where asked to make comment on the areas which they felt could be improved upon in order to develop a single culture between the staff from the two campuses. The comments have been extracted from the questionnaires and can be seen below.

Comments from Chester staff	Comments from Warrington staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More team teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listening skills, sharing of good practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More joint meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More regular meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swap ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social events	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointment of Warrington staff to cross-campus ports of responsibility (this may be difficult due to lack of volunteers0	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• interactive discussion boards (IBIS)	

Comments outlining what staff feel could be improved to further develop a
a single culture (Chester / Warrington case study)

Question 13: *What do you think the main benefits that the merger between Chester and Warrington brings to the organization which employs you?*

Question 13 generated a series of positive and similar comments from both sets of staff, the main themes being around greater opportunities, resources and sharing best practice. The comments can be seen below.

Comments from Chester staff	Comments from Warrington staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Larger catchments area and market opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More security
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exposure to some aspects of best practice in teaching and curricula	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warrington gives Chester access to other parts of the North West region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bigger player in the field
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunity to teach at Warrington campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More opportunity for intellectual discussion / sharing

Comments outlining what staff feel the main benefits of the merger have been (Chester / Warrington case study)

Question 14: *If you were asked what could improve the arrangement between Chester and Warrington, what would they be?*

The final question again asked respondents to make comments. These have been illustrated below.

Comments from Chester staff	Comments from Warrington staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better ‘hot desking’ facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More explicit sharing of good practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuation and developments in subject terms rather than geographic terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued expansion of Warrington based courses to build a critical mass of programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

Comments outlining what staff feel could be improved between the merger (Chester / Warrington case study)

Findings

A questionnaire was distributed to staff from both Chester and Warrington campuses comprising of fifteen questions, which were designed to explore staff attitudes towards delivering a “joined up” service and establishing if there was any evidence to suggest a single culture had developed between the two sets of staff. It was also envisaged that the questionnaire would be able to test the validity of the afore mentioned “CHANGED” model. From the analysis it became clear that two distinct sets of views were apparent between the two sets of staff.

From the survey analysis it is apparent that both sets of staff feel unsure if the reasons for the merger were explained to them and only a small percentage of the Warrington based staff responded positively to this question. Interestingly enough though most of the Chester based staff felt that they would have benefited from better communications yet the opposite response from the Warrington based staff was given. From the comments generated from this question it would appear that staff were advised that the merger was going to happen but were not actually involved in the decision making process. From further comments made, it would also appear that the Chester (site) had “taken over” the Warrington (site). This could explain the general negative feelings from the Warrington based staff in response to further questions.

When asked if the merger had enabled a more “joined up” service most of the Chester based staff felt that it had, yet most of the Warrington based staff responded negatively to this question. Through out the analysis, it became apparent that the Warrington based staff generally felt negatively about the merger, which is in contrast to the general feelings of the Chester based staff.

The main themes which emerged from the analysis of the Warrington based staff responses appear to be around the lack of integration between the two sets of staff, a lack of induction to Chester’s policies/procedures, a lack of timetabling across sites, a lack of

sharing of best practice, a lack of involvement with the merger and no base for staff from the Warrington campus at the Chester campus. From the comments from both sets of staff it could be argued that some elements of the “CHANGED” model could be adopted in order to create a “joined up” culture between the two sets of staff and develop further “joined up” working. At present there is little evidence to suggest that a single culture has developed between the two sets of staff. It could be argued that both sets of staff may only be committed to the partnership if they had been engaged in the merger process. When staff were asked what factors would help create a single culture, most comments were based around communication and sharing of best practice. Under the “CHANGED” model, this falls within the “Networking” element.

Summary

This chapter has presented a mini case study in order to compare the Speke OSS and SLH partnership arrangement with that of another public / public partnership (merger) arrangement. It has been established that elements of the “CHANGED” model could have been adopted in the merger between University College Chester and Warrington Collegiate Institute in order for helping achieve a single culture develop between the two sets of staff and to enable staff to provide a more seamless service.

Appendix 8 - Questionnaire for 2nd Year MBA Students

I am currently in my third year MBA working on my final dissertation, which is looking at public/public partnerships. The partnership I am looking at is between a One Stop Shop and a registered Social Landlord who is sharing office space and deal with customers on a face to face basis from the same enquiry counter.

Linking the research I have carried out so far and the theory that is written around the subject area, I have developed a model called the CHANGED model. This stands for:

- **Commitment**
- **Holistic**
- **Attitude**
- **Networking**
- **Generic**
- **Engage**
- **Develop**

Literature states that for partnerships to be successful, both parties must have a commitment to each other, communicate, continually develop and build trust in order for the right attitude to be apparent in the workforce. From this, the above model has been developed. In order for me to test the validity of this model, or elements of it I would be grateful if you could answer the below questions:

4. In your experience of partnership arrangements within LCC do you think the above model could be applied?

5. Which of the elements of the model do you feel are most important to a successful partnership?

6. Which of the elements of the model do you feel are the least important to a successful partnership?